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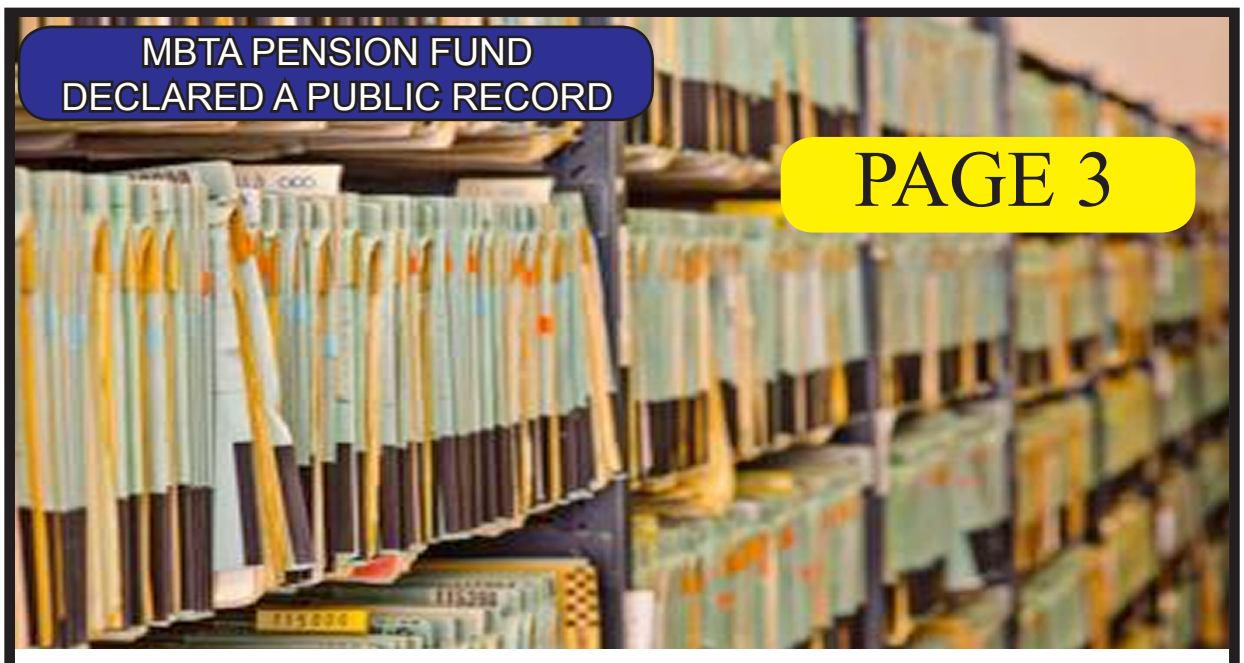

The Massachusetts State Senate has passed sweeping reforms of the state's public records law, closing the loopholes left by the House of Representatives, and putting strict penalties on those who conceal public documents. ... MORE ...

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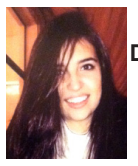

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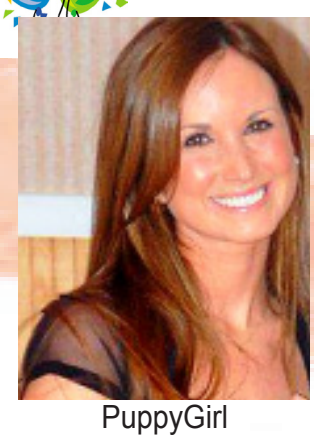

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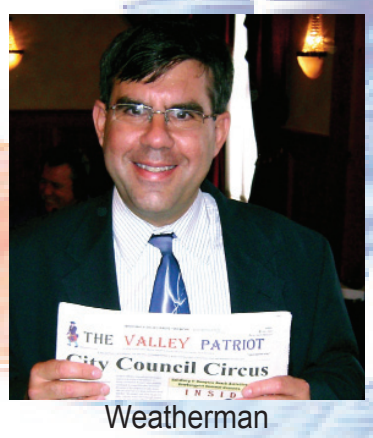

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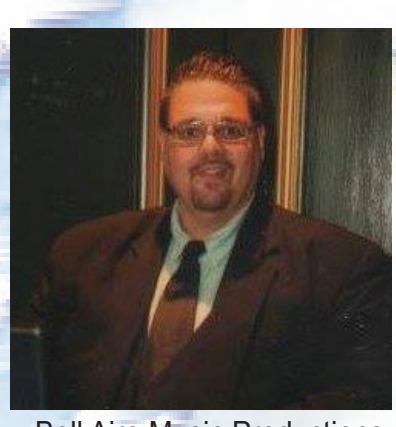

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"Migrnats" on the Move

Jeff Katz
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Over the past few weeks we've seen reports of millions of so called migrants traveling through Europe. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed hundreds of thousands of these "refugees" and proclaimed that her nation would do everything necessary to help them assimilate. The problem now on clear display is that these folks, the bulk of who are young able bodied men not women or small children, are apparently not all that interested in following the law let alone beginning the process of assimilating to a new culture.

On New Year's Eve, German police reported that roving bands of young men were launching sexual assaults and attacks on German girls and young women. Attacks took place in 12 of Germany's 16 states, with more than 800 such sexual assaults taking place in Cologne alone. Interestingly, Cologne has been the epicenter of the migrant wave. The young men who launched these attacks had been welcomed to escape alleged oppression as part of Merkel's open door policy. Instead of fleeing oppression, Merkel's migrants begin to assault, rape, beat and oppress the very people who had opened their homeland to them. The police indicated that they were completely unprepared for these vicious attacks but instead of bolstering law enforcement's ranks, Merkel suggested that Germans just needed to be more tolerant of their new guests and suggested that Germans should be "culturally sensitive" when dealing with them. In fact Merkel warned her fellow Germans that, "We must accept migrants are more criminal."

It wasn't just Germany that saw these obviously well orchestrated sexually predatory acts either. Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland also reported that young asylum seeking men were hunting young girls and women and subjecting them to brutal sexual assaults. The phrase "cultural differences" was again offered by way of explaining these crimes. Cultural differences? One European mayor even suggested that women simply "keep men at arm's length" to prevent such cultural misunderstandings!

Some of these young men are currently on a timeout and not allowed to use local swimming pools. Why? Well, the culturally unaware migrant men were reported to have masturbated in a public swimming pool's Jacuzzi before defecating in the kiddie pool. Afterwards, they apparently invaded the girls' changing rooms. The behavior of the asylum seekers was so bad that a poster advising them not to touch the rear ends of young girls was posted. In case they missed that, leaflets with the same message were provided to the buildings where they are living free of charge. Hopefully, they will read them while they are on their double secret probation.

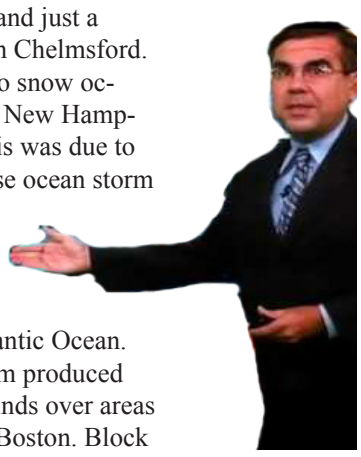
While all of this is happening, the President of Iran is visiting Italy. Iran's current government routinely sentences women accused of adultery to be stoned to death and orders that gay men be thrown from the tops of skyscrapers. No mention was made of this unique system of jurisprudence but the Italian government did erect walls around beautiful historic statues at the Capitoline Museum so that the Iranian leader would not have to see them. It would be offensive to him to see such great artwork because those statues, including a centuries old depiction of Venus, are nudes. Cultural differences, don't you know?

"WEATHER 101" WITH AL!

February Storm

Al Kaprielian
VALLEY PATRIOT WEATHERMAN

We finally did see winter return in January along with the Blizzard of 2016. However, it was not a blizzard for all of New England, just mainly for Cape Cod & the Islands. Snowfall totals ranged fromm 15 inches in Falmouth on the upper Cape to 6 inches in Boston (Logan Airport) and just a coating in Chelmsford. In fact, no snow occurred in New Hampshire. This was due to the intense ocean storm tracking farther offshore over the open Atlantic Ocean. This storm produced strong winds over areas south of Boston. Block Island had wind gusts to 75 miles per hour, which are hurricane force winds. 74 miles per hour or greater is classified as hurricane force. Nantucket Island saw a wind gust to 73 miles per hour. Marshfield, south of Boston had a wind gust to 70 miles per hour.



Woods Hole on the upper Cape had a wind gust to 63 miles per hour. High astronomical tides coincided with this storm, which caused coastal flooding and beach erosion along the coast. January will end with milder weather as the upper level subtropical high pressure off the east coast strengthens again similar to what we saw in November & December. This subtropical high will cause temperatures to be well above average as we begin February. High temperatures will rise into the 50's and possibly even some low 60 's. As February begins, all the arctic air will be locked up at the North Pole and Siberia. The long-range computer models want to bring this artic air back south toward us during February; time will tell. It is quite possible we can see another winter storm or blizzard in February. Remember the Blizzard of 1978 occurred in February. Before I close, with a lot of mild weather this winter a lot of our lakes and ponds are not fully frozen. As a result parents, the safest place to go is a public indoor skating rink where you know the ice is safe for skating. Stay tuned to next month's article to see if winter temperatures and storms are back. A reason this winter has been milder with less snow than last winter is due to El Nino. This occurs when the ocean waters of the South Pacific Ocean are warmer than normal. This causes more of a trough in the jet stream resulting in lots of snow in the Rockies and heavy rain on the west coast and southwest US. The reverse occurs on the east coast with more ridging and milder temperatures. No two winters can always have the same weather pattern and weather conditions. Keep following the weather each day for changes that may occur with the computer models.

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Senate Passes Sweeping Public Records Reform Bill

The Massachusetts State Senate unanimously passed sweeping reforms of the state's impotent public records law last month. Senate Bill 2120, "An Act Improving the Administration and Enforcement of Public Records Law"

The law will make sweeping changes to MGL Ch. 66, which currently states that public agencies and municipalities must turn over public documents and public information within ten days of the request by a member of the public. The problem with the 40-year-old law is that there are no penalties for public officials who violate it.

In November of last year, the House of Representatives unanimously passed changes to the public records law, (submitted by Rep. DiZoglio) but, watered down most of Duggan's language after the Massachusetts Municipal Association started lobbying for their members who would be paying the fines for not turning over documents.

The House stripped out penalties for officials who violate the public records law and actually increased the time frame that public officials have to turn over public records.

This month, the State Senate voted to pass most of the House version of the bill, but not before making some needed changes, and returning some of Duggan's language, which he says will protect the public's right to know what their government officials are spending their money on.

"It took tremendous courage for the Senate, in particular, Senators Ives, Tarr, Ross, and L'Italien, to stand up to the Mass. Municipal Association and their surrogates in the House. This was not a very popular piece of legislation in the power chambers on Beacon Hill. In fact, the first two times I submitted this through Rep. Dizoglio and Sen. Ives, it never even made it out of subcommittee. By amending this bill, the Senate is putting stricter penalties on officials who break the law and the ability for the public to get back legal fees for suing public agencies who refuse to turn over public documents," Duggan said.

State Senator Ives said that the new language in the bill "would allow a Superior Court to award reasonable attorney fees to requestors who seek and obtain judicial relief after their request for public records was not completed."

A government entity may also be required to pay punitive damages, ranging from $1,000 to $5,000 if a Superior Court rules that they acted in bad faith.

Damages would be directed to a fund to support municipal improvements to their information technology capabilities.

State Senator Barbara L'Italien, who also supported the changes to make the public records law more strict, said she was happy to have a unanimous vote.

"Today's unanimous vote of the Senate finally puts some teeth into Massachusetts' public records law," she said.

"I was proud to stand with my colleagues in passing our bill to make public documents more accessible to the public and reform our public records law, which is widely considered to be one of the weakest in the nation."

"It is simply unacceptable that the media and ordinary citizens should face unreasonable delays and high fees to gain access to

information that rightly belongs in the public domain," said Sen. Jason Lewis, D-Winchester.

"Government transparency and accessibility are fundamental to a healthy democracy. This important reform legislation will help bring the Commonwealth into the 21st century and strengthen the public trust in our government institutions."

Senate Bill 2120 would allow public agencies and municipalities 15 days to comply to a request for public records instead of 10 under the current law. It will also demand they charge reasonable fees in order to produce requested information. The public cannot be charged more than five cents per black-and-white page copy provided to a requestor.

Additionally, state government entities may only charge an hourly rate equal to the rate of the lowest paid employee capable of completing the request after the first four hours of labor, but that rate would not exceed $25 per hour.

Municipalities may begin to charge an hourly rate after two hours of labor. Fees may be waived or reduced if a request is made in the public interest or if the requestor lacks the financial ability to pay.

A public official cannot charge a fee if they fail to furnish the requested records within 15 days of the request, or if they do not respond in 10 days to notify the requester of the need for an extension. Such notifications must provide a detailed, written explanation for the need of an extension and include an estimate of fees and an alternative time in which the records can be reasonably produced, but not to exceed 30 days.

Now that the House and Senate have passed different versions of the new public records bill, those differences have to be resolved in what is called a conference committee. There, three senators and three members of the House will pour over the bill and negotiate the final wording to be passed by both houses of the legislature and then must be signed by Governor Baker.

MBTA Pension Fund Subject to Senate Public Records Bill

Boston - The State Senate today adopted legislation to make certain Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Retirement Board records subject to the provisions of a new public records access law.

Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) successfully championed the legislation which will apply to all documents made or held by the board or any of the public or private entities which receive funds from the MBTA for the payment or administration of employee pensions.

"The value and significance of a fund such as this, with $2.4 billion in liabilities, has a significant impact on the lives of T employees and has major cost implications for the MBTA," said Senator Tarr. "Disclosures about the stability of the MBTA pension fund are paramount and deserve to be subject to this records reform law and transparency."

Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford), a co-sponsor of the amendment said, "Including the MBTA Retirement Board in this records law is arguably one of the most important components of this bill."

In addition to the inclusion of the MBTA Pension Fund under the public records law, the Senate also adopted other amendments offered by Tarr and members of the Senate Republican Caucus.

Senators also adopted two other Tarr amendments:

The creation of a fund to provide grants to cities and towns for information technology enhancements to increase public access to records. Funds would be collected from assessed punitive damages.

The requirement is that Statements of Financial Interests, or so-called ethics reports, filed annually by lawmakers to be made available electronically.

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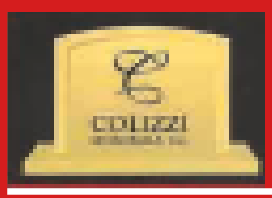

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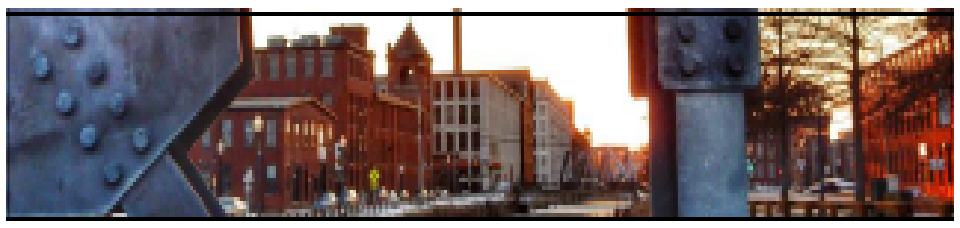

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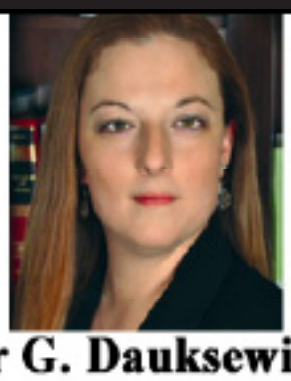

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Stranger Than Fiction

Oscar Camargo
VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Do you like fiction? I'm not a fan.

When I read, "Rep. Lyons Reviews Legislative Accomplishments at Mid Session" I couldn't believe what I was reading.

Read it. You get the impression that State Representative Jim Lyons (R-Andover) was giving personal advice to Governor Charlie Baker on how to run the Commonwealth. Nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, it was a classic example of someone trying to cloak themselves in another person's accomplishments.

What Gov. Baker accomplished is commendable and reflected in his approval ratings. But Gov. Baker's accomplishments are his own--no one else's. I disagree with some of the Governor's policy decisions, but I can respect a man who works with both sides of the aisle to get things done.

In other words, Rep. Lyons you're no Charlie Baker.

Rep. Lyons' tenure has been disappointing. Throughout his three terms in office, he's maintained one of the lowest committee attendance records in the State House. His biggest legislative victory was about windshield wipers and headlight usage. His attacks against imaginary opponents are reminiscent of Don Quixote attacking a windmill--simply laughable.

If voting up-or-down was the sole responsibility of a legislator I'd have no reason to doubt Rep. Lyons' commitment--but it's not. It requires continuous engagement with the public, not just during election cycles. It demands attention towards local matters, not pandering to presidential candidates. It obliges one to understand that cooperation and compromise are necessary tools, not a signs of weakness.

The reality is this: Rep. Lyons' accomplishments are a work of fiction. That's why I'm running for State Representative, because we need a real leader on Beacon Hill--not a fictitious one.

Knowing the Differences Between Physicians, Physician's Assistants, & Nurse Practitioners

Our center staffs a range of medical experts with varying skills, specialties and levels of expertise. During your visit, you may hear different people introduce themselves as a physician, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. When patients are offered medical services by any of these providers, the most frequently asked question is "What is the difference?" We would like to explain the differing duties and responsibilities between each position.

Physician: A physician is a medical doctor who has completed a 4-year undergraduate degree, passing the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), 4 years of medical school and 3-8 years of internship, residency and fellowship. Medical schools are highly competitive and require top grades and test scores to be granted admission. Board exams are taken for licensure and the medical provider must participate in continuous learning to maintain licensure. In addition to urgent care centers, doctors also work in hospitals, primary care offices/general medicine, community health clinics, they teach at universities and medical schools, and of course can pursue specializations in Cardiology, Pulmonology, Neurology, Oncology, Surgery etc. Doctors also participate and publish pertinent medical research, advancing medical treatments and practice. At AFC Doctors Express Urgent Care North Andover, our physicians are general practitioners, meaning their skills are perfectly suited for an urgent care center. Most general practitioner physicians spent their residency in internal medicine - a specialty emphasizing the diagnosis and treatment of general illnesses and diseases in relation to the internal organs. Internists, who aspire to be specialists, will spend their internships working alongside physicians who work in their desired field. Our center employs four board-certified physicians, who individually bring different elements of expertise to make our facility the ideal full-service

NURSE: PAGE 21

ANNE'S ANDOVER NOTEBOOK

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER COLUMNIST

FORENSICS - There was a lot of mystery and mayhem going on at Andover High School in the past few weeks. As part of a class on the study of forensics, students had the opportunity to try to solve a real hands on crime scene. The premise was to have one set of students set up a crime scene and a second set of students use forensics to determine who had committed the crime.

This was part of a class study to understand the use of forensics in solving a crime and by going through evidence, such as fingerprints, blood, and even hair samples, to determine who of the potential criminals had actually committed the dastardly crime.

When the jury trial began, the experts (students) had to make a convincing case that would show, without a doubt, who was the perpetrator. This course meant that they had to study and prepare their evidence so that a layperson could understand and make a decision on guilt or innocence of the defendant.

This study of forensics is familiar to many of us through books, television and films. It is also becoming an important part of science using the tools of forensics, to study many forms of investigation.

Ms. Lindsey L'Ecuyer is the inspired teacher who teaches this course. Her other courses are Introduction to Bio Tech, and Introduction to Bio Ethics.

While the course was certainly interesting, it is an important development in the study of many related fields. Teaching this subject in such an inventive and practical way should raise the interests of the students, who may see this as a viable career choice.

ANDOVER SENIOR HIGH 2016

Over the past several months I have fortunate to meet many students from Andover.

This article is my critique of the current group of young people and by extension, their teachers. It has been several years, since I attended high school, I am amazed at the quality and kindness of the students, the genuine good fellowship that is exhibited, and the good relationship between teacher and student.

This past weekend, the Mr. Andover High School 2016 contest was held at the Collins Center before a large and enthusiastic crowd of parents, students and faculty.

I was amazed at the talent displayed by the students, the fun everyone had, the behind the scenes crew that quickly changed the backdrops, the hosts for the show, David Lee, Katie Holden and Bill Rui and the contestants, Wonhee Han, and his sponsor, Meghan Mucher, Bruce Waters, and his sponsor Maggie Shaw, Bryce Corbitt and his sponsor Nicole Kim, Gabe Levine, and his sponsor Lily Tavares, Raini Huynh and his sponsor, Dana Donovan, Thomas Haut and his sponsor Amanda Brosnan.

The show followed the usual format for a talent contest, each contestant went through the talent, questions and answers (at least partially), the introduction of 2015 contestants winners (who also took part in the talent exhibition) and the selection of this year's Mr. AHS 2016, Raini Huynh, was enthusiastically applauded.

Advisers for the show were Mrs. Chachus and Mrs. Hibino, Producers were Andrew Lucia and Bill Rui, Choreographer was Anna Wessel.

A great show, great young people and a fantastic support from young and old alike.

ACTIVITIES - Mid winter is a very good time to get out and about and see what is going on in our town. The Center at Punchard, 30 Whittier Court, has listed several transportation services available for seniors 60+. Carol Howe at the Center can

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North Andover Senior Center

Two representatives from AARP will be at the North Andover Senior Center starting on Mondays in February to assist North Andover Seniors with the preparation of their 2015 Income Tax Returns. This service is by appointment only. To qualify for assistance you must be 60 years of age or older, of moderate income and live in the North Andover community. Please bring with you a copy of last year's tax return (State & Federal) as well as your real estate tax bill, your water and sewer bill and form MA 1099HC and rental receipts if applicable. Information will be available for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit for low and moderate-income seniors whose real estate tax payment is greater than 10% of their income. You must file a state income tax return to claim the Circuit Breaker Credit, whether or not you have to file otherwise. If your credit is greater than the amount of income taxes you owe, the state will give you a check for the difference. The maximum credit for tax refund for tax year 2015 is $930. For an appointment, please call the North Andover Senior Center.

As the weather gets colder and the snow starts to fly, be a Good Neighbor by checking in on friends, older adults and neighbors, particularly those living alone. Our older adults are most susceptible to extreme temperatures caused by power outages.

Come to our FIX IT Shop! MR. FIX IT: First and 3rd Thursday of every month from 12-3pm. We repair almost as good as new. Lamps, with cords and sockets, replace watch batteries, small tables and chairs. Anything that is not listed, we will give it a shot! Your cost is $2 - $4 depending on work needed, plus parts. Proceeds benefit the Senior Center.

WALK IN CLINIC: Wednesdays 9am-12pm, the North Andover Senior Center and Home Health Inc./VNA operate a wellness clinic. If you are a North Andover Senior, we urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to check your blood pressure, blood sugar, weight and blood oxygen levels. Consult privately with an RN regarding any medication and health issues that you are concerned about. There is no charge for this service. Donations are gratefully accepted.

Wednesday February 10th "Let Me Call You Sweetheart"; an afternoon of romantic jazz and sing along with the Eric Baldwin Quartet. 12:30-2:00. Sweet refreshments will be served compliments of BrightView Senior Living. Tickets ($3) available with reception.

February SUPPER CLUB: Thursday February 18th. Time and place TBD.

NEW WELLNESS SERVICES AT THE NORTH ANDOVER SENIOR CENTER

MASSAGE THERAPIST: Antonio Chong, MSW, LMT will be at the North Andover Senior Center the 2nd Friday of every month 15 or 30 minute Chair Massage Sessions Available. Call reception for the Next Available Appointment. Special Discount for Senior Citizens.

FOOT CARE: RN Catherine Languedoc, Foot Care Specialist ($30), 1st and 3rd Friday of every month from 8:30-2:30.

How about joining a new Exercise Class?

WALKING GROUP- Our Walking Group walks at the Youth Center at 9 a.m., Monday through Friday. Athletic shoes required for the gym floor.

Yoga- Mondays at 9-10am.

Strength Training & Yoga Combo- Mondays 10-11:30am.

Tai Chi & Chi Gong- Tuesdays at 9-10am.

Joy of Exercise- Thursdays at 10-11am.

Zumba Basic & Fitness- Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 4:30-5:30pm.

Zumba Gold- Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:30-4:15pm.

Other wonderful programs and classes to join-

CHESS CLUB: Tuesdays 1-3pm.

MAHJONG: Thursdays 1-3pm.

KNITTING: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30am. New project "Hats for Vets and Kids"

WOMEN'S FORUM: 4th Thursday of every month, 1:30-3pm

*ART CLASS: Tuesdays 1-3pm, $60 for 6 classes (*Will return in March)

ONE ON ONE COMPUTER INSTRUCTION: 45 minute sessions for $7, Tuesdays with George Chory and Thursdays with Tom Kooken. Hours are 9am-12pm. Make your appointments with reception 978-688-9560. This time can accommodate gadgets, too, if necessary (Phones, Tablets, etc.)

LECTURE SERIES: Every Monday 10-11:30am. Call reception 978-688-9560 for the schedule.

NEWS & VIEWS: Every Wednesday at 10–11:30am. Come and join in the lively discussion of current events, politics, history and you never know what else?!

MEET WITH AN ATTORNEY: Atty. Bridget Murray, Tuesday Feb 23rd and Atty. Ramsey Bahrawy, Tuesday Feb 9th. Schedule with Reception-first consult

Volunteers are the backbone of the North Andover Senior Center, we currently need Medical Transport Volunteers. You can set your own hours. Call the Senior Center for more information. Speak with our Program Coordinator at 688-9560 for an application and assistance.

GET BASH TICKETS AT EVENTBRITE.COM - THE BASH IS 3-25-16

Say NO To Common Core English at Methuen High

DJ Deeb
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

There is currently a push being made by some members of the Methuen School District Administration to push members of the Methuen School Committee to adopt Common Core English Language Arts standards under the guise of implementing the new Massachusetts Statewide English Language Arts Framework. Parents and community members need to contact School Committee members and voice their opposition to these proposed changes. Our students deserve better!

A lively debate has emerged nationally regarding Common Core and many parents, teachers, and residents have correctly recognized that it amounts to a lowering of standards for Massachusetts's students. Observers have correctly recognized that so-called "Common Core" amounts to a lowering of standards for Massachusetts's students. Currently, Massachusetts's students rank #1 in the nation and #7 in the world. This has been made possible by MCAS, which despite its flaws is a more higher-stakes test than the Common Core PARCC test.

It is interesting to note that on January 12, Diane Barrow, West Coast Sales Manager for Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, ignited a firestorm by confessing, "I'm in it [advocating for Common Core] to sell books…You don't think the educational publishing companies are in it for education, do you? No, they're in it for the money." Of course, Barrow was promptly fired by the textbook company for being honest. With 42 states and the District of Columbia adopting Common Core, textbook companies like Houghton Mifflin will be able to publish and sell more books with a more uniform focus. That's the real truth about Common Core.

At the January 11, 2015 Methuen School Committee meeting, members of the Methuen High School Administration, including the English Language Arts Department Chair, tried to get the Methuen School Committee to adopt a new Program of Studies for the 2016-2017 school year adopting the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, incorporating Common Core into the Methuen High School curriculum. The Methuen School Committee voted to table approval of this recommendation until the next scheduled business meeting on February 8th in order to have a chance to review the proposed changes more thoroughly.

Specifically, the Methuen High School Administration and Assistant Superintendent Brandi Kwong are proposing that the 10th grade American Literature I course be replaced with a new course called The Rebel In Literature. The title itself should raise a red flag (quite literally) and it does! This proposed change would phase out classical American literary giants Nathanial Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe and replace them with the more contemporary authors Julia Alvarez and Amy Tan. Methuen School Committee members were told that the new course will allow "variation" and flexibility" and that two years of American Literature without a "global perspective" does disservice to our students. We were further told that the current curriculum, which has worked well for more than 50 years, is sometimes "too dry" for students. This new proposed course, The Rebel In Literature, is being driven by the MHS Leadership Team and constitutes the Common Core curriculum in disguise. It is simply a "dumbing down" of our curricula standards.

Upon being questioned, Assistant Superintendent Brandi Kwong admitted that this proposal is being submitted in order to adopt the new 2011a Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks, which incorporates Common Core. We are further told in the proposed Program of Studies that this new course "encompasses all genres, including works from authors writing in the midst of social, political, or personal upheavals." It sounds like we are educating for the New World Order here. We are replacing the current emphasis on what America great (The Declaration of Independence and The Federalist Papers) to stressing a "global perspective" and imposing political correctness along with radical liberal ideas.

Our students deserve better. Our students are not a social experiment. We should not replace high standards and rigor with courses that allow "variation" and "flexibility." The current courses work because they teach our students advanced vocabulary, grammar, writing skills, and critical thinking. I urge all Methuen parents and community members to contact their School Committee members and urge them to vote "No" on the new proposed English Language Arts curriculum/ course changes.

D.J. Deeb is a Methuen resident and member of the Methuen School Committee. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/ Government at Bunker Hill Community College and an Adjunct Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is the author of Israel, Palestine, and the Quest for Middle East Peace (University Press, 2013) and The Collapse of Middle East Peace (IUniverse, 2003).

Hasmukh Vora of Rt. 110 Convenience Store in Methuen has sold five winning scratch tickets at $1M each and says Powerball is helping his small business.

Powerball's Historic Jackpot and What it Means to the Local Economy

Massachusetts State Lottery Director Michael Sweeney told The Valley Patriot last month that the Powerball jackpot fever that gripped the nation brought in $1.5B, for the largest lottery payout in world history.

"It's really a big win for the state," Sweeney said.

The Powerball jackpot hasn't been hit in 19 successive drawings. The last time someone hit the jackpot was the first week in November of last year. Every time there's a drawing, if the jackpot isn't won, that prize pool is carried over to the next drawing," Sweeney said days before the lottery was won.

He said that in the time that the jackpot hasn't been won, there have been smaller winners in each drawing.

"We had $1M winners in this time period and other smaller winners in other states. That obviously is paid out and those numbers are not included in the rollover jackpot number.

Between the last drawing and January 8th, Sweeney said that the Massachusetts State Lottery has raised over $28M in Powerball sales in Massachusetts, "which is also a new record."

Over the course of the last 19 drawings, (in just Powerball sales alone) the state has raised more than $22M in local aid for cities and towns across the state.

Tickets sold in California, Florida and Tennessee each won a share of the world-record setting $1.586B Powerball jackpot in the Wednesday, January 13 drawing. The final cash option on the prize was an estimated $983.5M. In Massachusetts, two $1M winning tickets were sold, one at 777 Convenience Store, 269 Main St. in Charlestown, the other at Tedeschi Food Shops, 52 Bedford St. in East Bridgewater.

Last month's Powerball drawing was the 20th since the jackpot was last hit on November 4th. Powerball sales in Massachusetts for the drawing totaled $32,970,847. The jackpot of $900M grew to $947.9M by the time of the draw, generated $23,830,638 in sales in Massachusetts. In the hours leading up to January's historic drawing, Mass. Lottery retailers across the state were churning out over $37,000 in Powerball sales per minute.

LOTTERY HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES

"Treasurer Goldburg has been focusing on increasing our engagement with local retail partners who sell lottery products. We give 6% of every dollar right back to the retailers who sell the winning tickets by giving commissions and bonuses," Lottery Director Sweeney said.

Just from Powerball sales since early November of 2015, roughly $3M will go back to small businesses selling lottery products.

"This has been very, very good for business," said Hasmukh Vora, owner of the Rt. 110 Convenience store in Methuen, as the line at his lottery counter stretched out the door.

"People come to play Powerball tickets, and they buy candy and cigarettes while they are waiting in line. Even if we don't sell the winning ticket, our business has a 40-70% increase since Powerball started making the news."

Vora has sold five separate $1M scratch ticket winners in the last six years, and says that his other store in Chelmsford (Village Mall Liquors), sold two $4M winning scratch tickets and one $6M winner.

"We have been very, very lucky," Hasmukh said.

"I came to this country and opened a store ten years ago. Never have I dreamed we would be so blessed. I also like that when we get a commission from a winning ticket, we get the money within a few weeks. It comes very fast. That's very helpful for a small, family run business like ours."

Vora says that his commissions from lottery winners helped him put his two sons through college.

"I used the money from our scratch ticket bonuses to help pay for college for my sons, Heem and Deep. Now, I have a grandchild. Any money we get now from winning tickets goes directly to education funds for the future."

Lottery Director Sweeney said that working with local retailers means a more

POWERBALL: PAGE 19

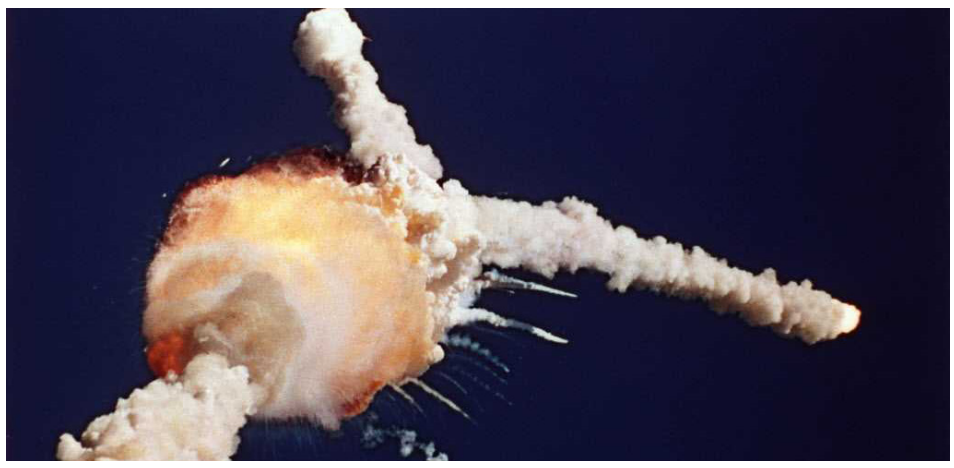
EMILY'S BAKERY

We are open: Monday - Saturday: 6AM to 5PM * Sunday - Closed

223 Lincoln Ave, Haverhill, MA. 01830 * phone/fax: (978) 374-9603
Write us at: emilys@comcast.net

What I Learned About Life When the Challenger Blew Up

(prestando attencione!)
PAYING ATTENTION!
with Tom Duggan



On the day of the Challenger explosion I was teaching at the Henry K. Oliver School in Lawrence.

Having lost my first bid for school committee at 18 years old, I had been offered a position as a substitute teacher and oddly enough, was made a permanent substitute almost immediately by Superintendent Gene Thayer.

My 6th grade class was watching the television, as was every classroom at the Oliver. The kids were happy to have lessons canceled for half the day so they could watch the shuttle liftoff, but mostly because they didn't have to do math and social studies.

As the shuttle took off, I started talking to the students about the importance of space travel, when all of sudden the unthinkable happened right before everyone's eyes.

Pay attention now, because every single word of this is true.

Without missing a beat, most of my kids started laughing and high fiving each other in celebration.

"YO SNAP! HAAA HAAA, DID YOU SEE THAT? WOW!" they said giggling and laughing about how "cool" the site of a space shuttle blowing up on TV was. One kid said he couldn't wait to get home and tell his mother what he saw at school that day; it was the most "DOPE" thing he had ever seen.

I'm sure my mom (Dorothy Duggan-Incropera, who was the school nurse at the time) can tell you what she experienced in the building that day as well. I recall her story being a little more detailed than mine.

The teachers and the administrators on the other hand were all sad, they moped around and whispered about how the kids were just behaving this way because they were "in shock" by what they had seen. Other teachers made excuses, saying that the kids just didn't understand how tragic it was. Not one of them bothered to face the reality that the kids behaving this way weren't in shock, and they weren't in "denial of their feelings". They just didn't care. These were inner city Lawrence kids who saw more violence in a month, than every teacher and administrator combined could see in a lifetime.

I bet you can guess what the faculty did the next day.

In true boilerplate fashion, they held an assembly where the principal explained how "serious and tragic" the event was, that it was nothing to laugh about, and encouraged kids to "share their feelings". They also offered "counseling" for the poor children, because it had to be traumatizing for them to have seen such a thing on television.

Kids were encouraged to "show how sad they were" by "maybe" writing letters to the dead astronauts families, color pictures, and "really let them know how much you care".

Yeah, they were not only coaching the kids on how they were supposed to react to such an event, but they were also coaching kids on how they were supposed to feel about such things … as if telling them they are supposed to care will make them want to care.

But it failed. It failed because, as the kids complied, drawing and writing letters in the classroom after the assembly, (it was way better than doing math, they said) they were laughing and joking and making gestures of an explosion with their hands. They were also begging me to put the TV back on, so they could watch the replay on the news over and over.

I learned a lot in the short time I taught in the Lawrence Public Schools.

Being only a few years older than the kids I was teaching, I think I learned the most on the day the space shuttle Challenger blew up.

The kids knew there is the fake reality (or social construct) in school where they were expected to be sad, or behave a certain way in the presence of adults, when in reality most of them really couldn't care less.

The kids also knew that there is a real world out there. A world that really is tragic and shocking, especially to those living in the tougher neighborhoods of inner cities like Lawrence.

To them, some far away tragedy that had no bearing on their daily lives seemed to be a little less tragic than it was for the adults around them.

For them, it seemed like this was all a big distraction from the real tragedies they had (and sadly some still have) to go home to when school is over. A reality that nobody seemed to care about doing anything about, because nothing has changed in those neigh-

CHALLENGER: PAGE 26

Why I am Supporting Ted Cruz for President

D.J. Deeb
OPINION COLUMNIST

I must say that the 2016 Presidential Elections have been the most exciting in my lifetime. There are several outstanding candidates for President on the Republican side and I honestly had a tough time making my mind up as to who was I going to support. It ultimately came down to three candidates who most shared my Libertarian Conservative views: Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), Donald Trump, and Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX). Unfortunately, Rand Paul's campaign has not taken off this year and Donald Trump (although I like him) has been too erratic and vague on the issues thus far. After having attended several town meeting forums with each of these candidates, I believe that Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) most represents my values, is best poised to restore America's greatness, and is in the best position to capture the GOP Nomination for President.

As is often the case, I found myself in agreement with Chuck Ormsby's very thorough analysis last month of Cruz and the other GOP candidates for President. It is important to recognize that we are never going to agree 100% with any candidate that is true of me with Ted Cruz. I disagree with Cruz on moving the American Embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and tearing up the nuclear arms deal with Iran. I believe that both of these will have disastrous consequences, but on the other hand, I agree with Cruz on many more of his positions.

Our country is certainly at a crossroads and I believe that this is the most important Presidential Election since 1980. Our country is $19 Trillion in debt, experiencing economic stagnation, and is suffering from failed Liberal bloated government policies. A record number of Americans (17%) is in poverty and a record number has become dependent on food stamps and other Federal Government benefits. We certainly can and need to reverse this trend.

I support Sen. Ted Cruz's plan to end Common Core, shut down the U.S. Department of Education, implement a flat tax, abolish the IRS, repeal Obamacare, and pass a Balanced Budget Amendment. Furthermore, Sen. Cruz, who has authored more than 70 Supreme Court briefs, writes, "We need to restore the Constitution as our standard. We need to protect the people by rolling back the federal government to the functions the Constitution sets out. We need to give power back to the states and the people so that we remain a land where liberty can flourish." I could not agree more!

Not only will Cruz eliminate the Department of Education and IRS, he favors abolishing the Departments of Energy, Commerce, and Housing and Urban Development as well. These actions would be a good first step in reducing the bloated Federal Government bureaucracy, balancing the budget, and reducing the Federal Debt. Corporations in the United States currently pay the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. Sen. Cruz's proposal to replace the graduated income tax and institute a 10% flat tax on individuals and corporations will stimulate economic growth by creating jobs, and reducing tax rates across the board for all Americans. In contrast, Donald Trump's plan to impose a 35% tariff on products imported from Mexico and China will create an

CRUZ: PAGE 19

Beware America's Radical Left Thought Police

Kenneth Willette
OPINION COLUMNIST

Did you know that if you reasonably question the security vetting process to verify incoming Syrian refugees, then your position is no different than the stance taken during World War II to deny Jews safe passage to our country. That if you challenge the Obama Administration to stand by our allies who were attacked across Europe and wage full-scale war to wipe out Islamic terrorists, or even call them Islamic in any fashion, then you are a warmonger and casting offensive aspersions against all followers of Islam. That if you attempt to engage in civilized and educated counter debate with the Black Lives Matter protestors, both on university campuses and on the streets, then you undoubtedly advocate institutionalized racism in our society. These are the stark black and white narratives being peddled by millions of radicalized liberals across the nation. If members of the Radical Left are not crashing the speeches of major presidential candidates, shutting down campuses, blocking streets and highways, and attacking police indiscriminately, then they are zealously destroying our nation's pluralistic freedom of speech one step at a time and removing any contrary political thought in its wake. But again if you disagree, then you are labeled a Nazi, a bigot, a sexist monster and an uneducated hick.

I give this nation much more credit than the Radical Left. I contend that our nation is always progressing forward and evolving. That we ended slavery, stopped Jim Crow discrimination, apologized for the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, gave women and African Americans the right to vote, won global wars against Nazism and communism, and elected diverse members of society to higher office. We don't live in a police state. Just like any group in society, there are good people and evildoers. The police are no different. But if you read some comments from prominent writers highlighting the recent MLK Holiday, many police departments today are no different than the police forces that fought to uphold segregation in the South during the 1960s. This is pathetic, historically inaccurate and only poisons the well of discourse. Many police officers want body cameras, are against racial profiling and reflect the racial diversity of the communities they serve and protect. They have given their lives to protect minorities and the underprivileged.

The Radical Left has an agenda that allegedly promotes diversity, knowledge, understanding and transparency, but remarkably, in many ways, that agenda is often achieving completely opposite results. They espouse comfortable safe zones, hold candlelight vigils against all perceived slights of gender, race and ethnicity bias and routinely call for the resignation of academic and political leaders who don't kowtow to their every demand. But try to engage many members of the Radical Left nowadays, and they will shout you down at the tops of their lungs, accuse you of violating their space even in public venues, label you all kinds of venomous names, and call in the muscle. It is the absolute height of hypocrisy that while many followers of the Black Lives Matter movement will interrupt political rallies attended by thousands of both Republicans and Democrats alike, thereby infringing upon these citizens to freely

LEFT: PAGE 19

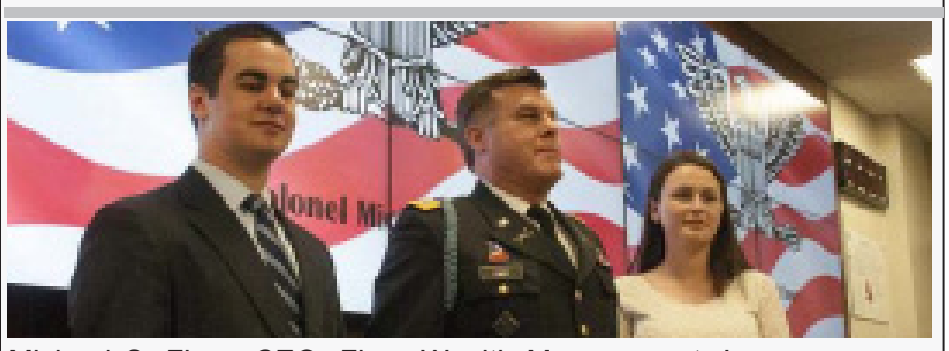
GET BASH TICKETS AT EVENTBRITE.COM - THE BASH IS 3-25-16

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

COVER UP CONTINUES IN LOWELL

I had high hopes for new Lowell Superintendent Khelfaoui when he was recently appointed, because I know what a cesspool of corruption and cover-ups the Lowell School system has become. But, when the son of a school committee member was involved in texting and posting racist epithets against a black student, and the high school administration tried to cover it up, (even asking the black student to pose in a selfie with the racist student to show "unity"), Superintendent Khelfaoui circled the wagons. The headmaster of the high school didn't notify his office for a full two days after the event, Headmaster Martin LIED to the Lowell Sun (saying all the students were under age while refusing to release any names), the son of a school committee member was allowed to run a track meet while the other kids involved were on suspension, and to top it all off, friends of the black student who was targeted say this isn't the first time an incident like this was covered up by the high school administration.

So, when Superintendent Khelfaoui released his report months later, a report he promised would be transparent and took months to "inveestigation" and compile, he violated the state's public records law by redacting information that had nothing to do with the names of the students. No heads rolled, the report was more of a political CYA that was rife with language about "looking forward" and making sure such incidents are handled properly in the future, but there was ZERO transparency in his report and zero accountability. So, once again I ask my readers, if that was your kid who used the "N" word against a black kid in high school instead of the son of a school committeeman, do YOU think he'd be able to play in a track meet that night? Do you think your kid would have the political machine of a school committee and superintendent's office circling the wagons to make sure the details of his misdeeds did not come out? Shame on Superintendent Khelfaoui. And shame on the people of Lowell who re-elected School Committeeman Gendron while all this was going on. You get the government you deserve. Unfortunately, it's the "children" who pay the price.



Michael S. Finer, CEO, Finer Wealth Management, Inc. at promotion ceremony pictured with son, Alex Finer and daughter, Lizzy Finer

Michael S. Finer, Promoted to Colonel

Michael S. Finer of Swampscott, MA, was recently promoted to the rank of Colonel in the MA Army National Guard. He is a graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the Army Command and General Staff College. Active in the military since 1983, Finer was Commander of Task Force Yankee in downtown New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina; Garrison Commander of Camp Cropper and the 181st Infantry Rear Area Operations Center during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Deputy Commander of Task Force Patriot during the Springfield Tornado operations and during Hurricane Irene. Colonel Finer is currently Director of Operations, Joint Staff, for the Massachusetts National Guard, which comprises approximately 8,500 soldiers, airmen and civilians. Colonel Finer has received numerous awards from the Army, including the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (twice); Army Commendation Medal (six awards); Army Achievement Medal (3 times); National Defense Service Medal; Iraq Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal; Massachusetts Medal of Merit; and Massachusetts Emergency Service Ribbon.

SECRETARY OF STATE GALVIN AND THAT PESKY 2ND AMENDMENT

Last month a state worker for Secretary of State Bill Galvin was harassed and fired for exercising their 2nd Amendment right to carry a licensed firearm to work at an office in Lawrence. Galvin's office sent an attorney to the Lawrence Office of the Registry of Deeds, called the Methuen and Lawrence Police to try and have an employee arrested because Galvin thinks his views on the 2nd Amendment is more important than the Constitution. But, when the police arrived they refused to arrest the state worker, saying she has every right under the law to carry a licensed firearm for personal protection. What's more, the worker asked, in front of police, to be shown the state or office policy prohibiting the possession of a licensed firearm while at work and Galvin's head hunter could not produce one, but no such policy exists.

So, what did Galvin do? He had his attorney humiliate the worker, fired her on the spot, and had the person escorted to their car by the police. The worker was also ordered not return to the property for any reason. According to sources in police department, the state worker obtained an attorney and got their job back two weeks later. And while the worker refused to speak about the matter referring us to their union representative, The Valley Patriot is very concerned that the Secretary of State for the commonwealth was able to harass, humiliate and fire a state worker ... with impunity... because he thinks his views on our constitutional rights are more important than the Constitution itself. Not surprisingly, there are now signs in that office spelling out a brand new policy prohibiting sate workers from exercising their rights to self protection ... in LAWRENCE. Only in Massachusetts!

MA GOP STATE COMMITTEE RACE

Two candidates, Sue LaPlante in Lawrence, and Dan Grayton in Methuen, are running for two separate seats on the state Republican committees. Sue and Dan are members of The Valley Patriot family and if you are a Republican in any of the cities and towns that we cover, I hope you will support Dan and Sue. My friend Charlie Baker is supporting Sue Laplante to fill the seat vacated by Cathy Richards in an attempt to get more moderate conservatives on the committee who will help him put forth his agenda. Dan Grayton, the former city councilor in Methuen has the support of the Tea Party and the more conservative wing of the Republican party and is running again Shawn Toohey who was kicked off the Haverhill School Committee by the VOTERS last year, only to be put back on the board by his political rubber stamp mentor, Mayor James Fiorentini.

SPEAKING OF TOOHEY....

How despicable is it, that the voters of Haverhill rejected Shawn Toohey's re-election bid to the school committee last year and then, Mayor Jim Fiorentini slapped them in the face by being the deciding vote to put him back on the board to fill the term vacated by Joe Bevelacqua (who ascended to the city council). Fiorentini's dishonest assertion was that traditionally, the person who was next in line has been and should be appointed when there's a vacancy. But, Toohey lost last year's re-election bid and Bevelacqua was elected two years earlier, meaning that Toohey was NOT the next person in line during the Bevelacqua election. What's more, Toohey has no interest in being on the school committee. He ran for state senate last year, trying to use his school committee seat to climb the ladder of politics, making it clear that the school committee is just a stepping-stone for his own political gain. So, Fiorentini once again made a political decision, not a decision that was best for the children of Haverhill, or the voters who sent a clear message in the last election that they did not want Shawn Toohey on the Haverhill School Committee.

ITS LEFT VS RIGHT IN NORTH ANDOVER SELECTMAN RACE

The North Andover board of selectman and school committee races are in March and once again the lone conservative activist on the board, Rosemary Smedile, is being challenged by a Democrat in what is supposed to be a non-partisan local race. Challenging Smedile this year is finance committee member Chris Nobile, who also served on the school committee.

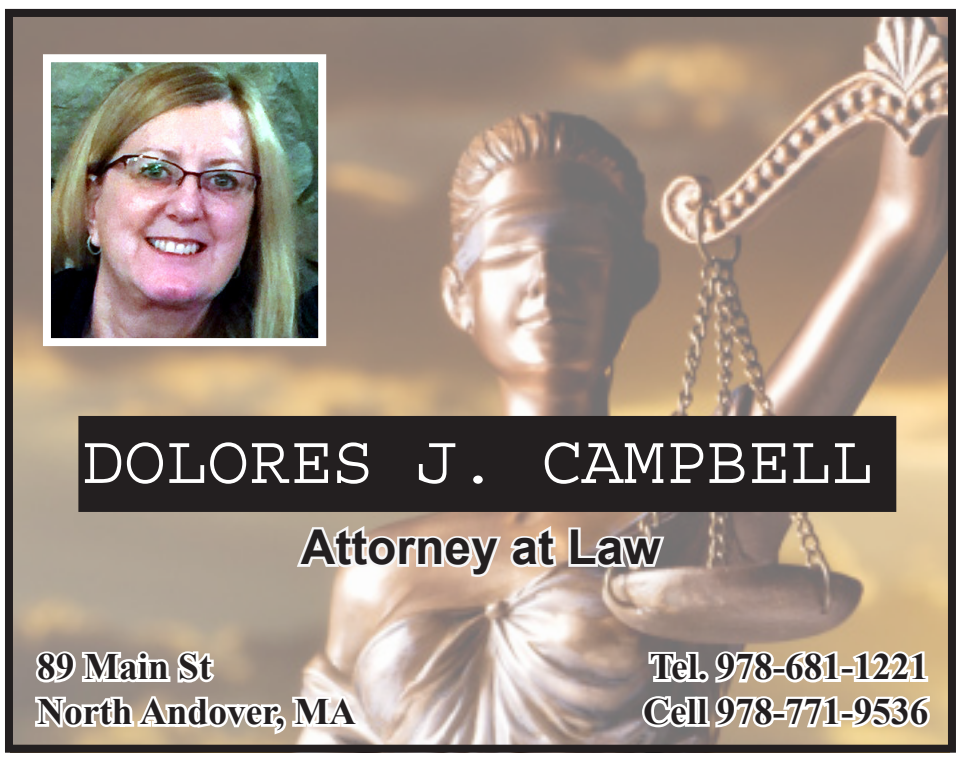
Nobile took a swipe at the board of selectmen in a press release last month saying, "It's been almost 20 years since the town set out to build a Master Plan and lay out goals for this neighborhood." Nobile also pointed out that, "Our current plan for Main Street is from a time when both a supermarket and kindergarten called our Main Street home - a lot has changed since then, but we've not responded to these changes."

For her part, Selectman Semdile is coming off a loss from her race for state representative last year. Smedile is touting her experience on the board and her part in turning around the town's finances. "We have very healthy cash reserves, our bond rating is now at the second highest level possible, and we've put aside enough cash in our rainy day fund to deal with those surprise costs that so often negatively impact a town budget."

Smedile is also campaigning on the progress of capital improvements in town. "We've built modern new police & fire stations, a new home for our school administration, and a new preschool building."

With a very low turnout expected, Smedile has the edge as 95%+ of elected incumbents are re-elected in low turnout elections. But, Nobile will have the support

CONTINUED: UNDER FREDDIE



FREDDIE SAYS

"I Will be attending the BASH on March 25th... FINALLY I get to meet the famous PUPPYGIRL!"

Freddie Says
EAT AT THE DAILY DOSE CAFE at PENTUCKET MEDICAL IN LAWRENCE
978-557-8601

DAVE'S CARTOONS: As our custom cartoonist, Dave Sullivan retired from The Valley Patriot last month. We wanted to honor his contribution to our newspaper, and our community over the years by republishing some of his best artwork. The cartoon above was from July of 2012, when the Haverhill Board of Health made the political decision to strip our veterans of their right to smoke in their private clubs (like the American Legion) because, they said, "it's bad for their health." This cartoon is one of Dave's absolute best, both artistically and in the very compelling message his artistry portrays.

of the members of the Democratic Town Committee making him viable as a former school committee member and an insider appointed by Mark DiSalvo to the town's finance committee.

SENTTOR PACHICO CARES MORE ABOUT HIMSELF THAN PUBLIC RECORDS

During the debate on changing the state's public records law earlier this month, Taunton state Senator Mark Pachico rose to be recognized from the Senate floor to discuss something paramount to direction of our commonwealth and the very important business of public records... his own ego. When the speaker of the Senate recognized Pachico, he whined like a little girl that Governor Baker had scheduled some kind of ribbon cutting in his district and announced he had to leave the debate, attacking Baker for scheduling a "press event" at a time that he would be in the Senate... doing his job. I was stunned as Pachico nursed his bruised ego and showed the voters of Massachusetts what his real priorities are, getting his name in the paper and doing mindless ego tasks like posing for a photo at a ribbon cutting. Shame on Senator Pachico. The state's very important business is the reason you are on Beacon Hill, but now we all know that the only thing you really care about is your own press clippings.

CANDIDATES DON'T PUT THEIR MONEY WHERE THEIR MOUTHS ARE - For months, The Valley Patriot and our news spotters have been driving the state of New Hampshire, interviewing, photographing, writing stories, even live video-podcasting town halls, and rallies on Twitter and Facebook with the presidential candidates.

While it has been a blast for everyone involved with our newspaper, particularly for myself, one thing disturbed me about all the candidates, particularly the repulbicans who tout themselves as friends of "small business".

Every candidate running for president talks a good game about how much they care about small business and "the little guys" in the middle class.... yet, not one of them have spent a dime on political advertising in small local newspapers. They are pouring millions into the mainstream media, corporate machine, but .....small papers like mine and Methuen Life and the North Andover Citizen, never saw a dime of those advertising dollars. When I asked my friend Deb Paul of Nutfield Publishing, if she had experienced any influx of advertising dollars from the presidential candidates she said she hasn't seen any of those millions either. And she publishes in Derry, Londonderry, and Windham. Just think about how much a few thousand dollars in ad revenue could do for a small publishing company like Nutfield or The Valley Patriot. Just think of what those dollars could have done for the New hampshir and Massachusetts economy.

Remember that the next time you run into a presidential candidate. And if you get a chance to ask them a question, ask them why they spend ALL their money in the corporate media machine but not even a penny helping the "small businesses" in the media who did a better job covering the race than

NOTEBOOK: 26

Laplante Enters Race for State Committee Woman

Susan M. Laplante announced that she is entering the race for State Committee Woman for the 2nd Essex and Middlesex District, which encompasses Andover, Dracut, Lawrence, and Tewksbury. Laplante is looking to succeed outgoing Dracut incumbent Cathy Richardson.

"I am running because I want to grow the party and provide voters quality Republican choices in upcoming elections," said the long time Lawrence civic activist.

Laplante, the mother of three and spouse of Lawrence City Councilor Marc Laplante, understands the importance of having a viable Republican Party in Massachusetts. "One party domination in Massachusetts does a disservice to our residents," said Laplante. "We need to build upon the successes of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito."

"My number one goal is to recruit serious and substantial Republicans in our area," said Laplante. "Our residents deserve nothing less."

The Massachusetts election for State Committee Woman, a four year term, is on the same date as the Massachusetts Presidential election, March 1, 2016.

The Massachusetts Republican State Committee is made up of one man and one woman from each state senate district, and is charged with drafting and promoting the state Republican platform and recruiting Republican candidates for elected positions.

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A New Year of News

Kathy Runge
VALLEY PATRIOT LAWRENCE COLUMNIST

A change in City Council Leadership! At the January 4th swearing in ceremony, District C Councilor Kendrys Vasquez was elected President and District F Councilor Marc Laplante got the Vice Presidency, both by a 5 – 4 vote with Councilors Maldonado, DePena, Almonte and Alvarez-Rodriguez voting against on both. There is a noticeable improvement in the running of council meetings already.

At the end of the of the first regular meeting of the year, Councilor Almonte was true to form and delayed the adjournment by complaining about only being put on the Personnel Committee and not also being assigned to the Housing Committee. The council took a 5-minute recess so she could cool down, but she still wanted to keep going and a roll call vote had to be taken to adjourn with Councilors Alvarez-Rodriguez, Maldonado and Almonte voting against the motion.

When the Personnel Committee had their first meeting on January 12, Almonte got elected Chair again. One of the few items on their agenda was to review the appointment of Attorney Brian Corrigan as an Assistant City Attorney. It was obvious that Almonte was looking at the information packet for the first time although it had been in her mailbox since the end of December. I hear she's been posting pictures of herself helping the homeless on social media. That's great, but how about posting some pictures of yourself sitting at the kitchen table studying your council packet? Do your job!

When considered by the full council, Attorney Corrigan got the one-year appointment after Councilor Maldonado asked him if he was going to move to Lawrence; he said no. Councilor Almonte was concerned that the length of time applicants resided at their current address wasn't a question on the employment application.

On the other hand, Councilor Alvarez-Rodriguez was assigned to the Ordinance and Housing Committees. When she didn't get nominated for chair of the Housing Committee, she reminded Council President Vasquez that she'd informed him she wasn't going to take the time to serve on a second committee unless it was as the chair. She stated she wouldn't be attending committee meetings. I was stunned. When Alvarez-Rodriguez decided to run again for a council seat in in 2013, she stated that housing was one of her interests.

Councilor Maldonado spoke during public participation at the meeting of January 19. He complained that Council President Vasquez violated council rules at the previous meeting by putting non - Lawrence residents at the back of the line for public participation. He claims the rules were violated by not consulting with the full council first. How many times did Maldonado unilaterally order the City

LAWRENCE: PAGE 19

IN YOUR CORNER WITH SENATOR KATY IVES

State Senate Passes Bill to Improve Road Safety

The State Senate recently passed an important piece of legislation which aims to reduce motor vehicle accidents and fatalities by prohibiting the use of electronic mobile devices while operating a motor vehicle.

The technological capabilities of cell phones have given drivers more opportunities to become distracted at the wheel. Sending a text message or typing a destination in a GPS, multiplied by several times on a highway, quickly becomes a public safety issue.

Senate Bill 2093, "An Act to Prohibit the Use of Mobile Telephones while Operating a Motor Vehicle" responds to the concerns of law enforcement officials over the difficulty of enforcing the texting ban implemented in September 2010. While the 2010 law prohibited drivers from composing, sending, or reading text messages, the handling of mobile devices was banned outright only for individuals under the age of 18.

Five seconds is the average time a driver's eyes are taken off the road while reading or sending a text message. At 55 mph, those five seconds are enough to cover the length of a football field. The result has been an estimated one million motor vehicle accidents and 3,000 fatalities a year caused by distracted driving.

Fourteen other states and the District of Columbia prohibit drivers from using handheld mobile devices, including New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Vermont.

Senate Bill 2093 bans the use of mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle unless the devices are used in hands-free mode. It further prohibits drivers from touching or holding a mobile electronic device except to activate, deactivate, or initiate a feature or function. This prohibition includes accessing the internet to compose, send, or read an electronic message or to input information by hand into a global positioning system or navigation device while operating a motor vehicle.

Use of a mobile electronic device is permitted for emergency purposes, including reporting a disabled motor vehicle; that medical attention or assistance is required; that police intervention, fire department or other emergency service is necessary; or that a disabled vehicle or an accident is present in the roadway.

First offenders would be issued a $100 fine, a second offense would be a fine of $250, and a third offense would be a $500 fine and would be considered a moving violation and surchargeable event for auto insurance purposes.

The bill now moves to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for their consideration.

Senator O'Connor Ives can be reached at KATHLEEN.OCONNORIVES@MASENATE.GOV

Rep. Lyons Pushes Effort to Allow 72-hour Medical Hold for Treating Overdose Victims

State Representative Jim Lyons (R-Andover) today offered an amendment to allow doctors and care givers the power to involuntarily hold overdose victims at a hospital or drug treatment facility for an initial three day period to receive emergency treatment.

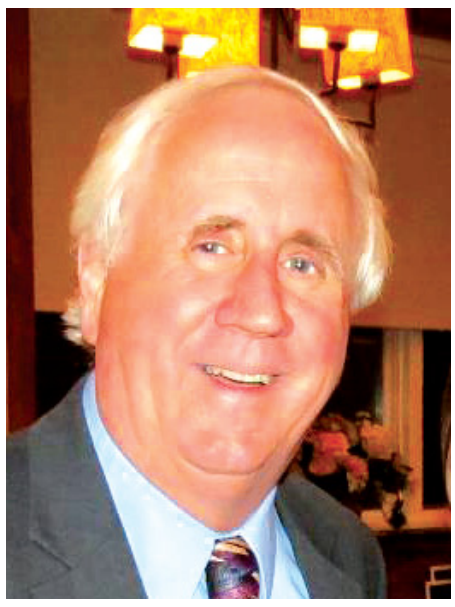
The amendment, put forth by Rep. Lyons and Rep. Shaunna L. O'Connell (R-Taunton), was offered during the debate on a comprehensive substance abuse bill designed to address the state's growing opioid crisis. Despite unanimous support from the House Republican Caucus, the amendment was defeated on a partisan roll call vote of 34-113.

The amendment would empower licensed physicians and other qualified medical personnel to restrain a patient and arrange for their referral to a treatment facility if they believe that failure to treat the patient would create a likelihood of serious harm. It also would allow the superintendent of the treatment facility to file for a commitment order through the courts after the initial holding period.

Massachusetts law currently permits the emergency restraint and hospitalization of individuals who pose a risk of serious harm by reason of mental illness, but not for those suffering from substance abuse. The proposed amendment would have extended the same emergency treatment measures to substance abusers, mirroring language that was included in an opioid abuse bill filed by Governor Charlie Baker last fall.

Representative Lyons said authorizing a three-day commitment procedure for overdose victims is critical to ensuring that they receive proper treatment to help them overcome their addiction. Having such an option available, he noted, would help to break the vicious cycle that results in many overdose victims returning to the same emergency room multiple times.

"When Governor Baker first filed his comprehensive plan, one of the key tenants of the proposal was the need to disrupt the cycle of addiction that was driving the overdoses across our state. The 72 hour hold would have done much to disrupt that cycle," commented Lyons. "While I'm disappointed that the House wasn't able to reach a consensus on this idea, I will continue to work with both sides of the aisle on possible solutions to ending this terrible epidemic in the Commonwealth."



An average of four people die from an opioid overdose every single day in Massachusetts. According to the Department of Public Health, 263 of the state's 351 cities and towns – 3 out of every 4 communities – experienced at least one opioid-related overdose death between 2012 and 2014.

In 2014 alone, 1,089 people died from opioid use in Massachusetts, representing a 20% increase over the previous calendar year and a 63% increase over 2012. Based on data available as of October 15, 2015, DPH estimates that the total number of confirmed opioid overdose deaths in 2014 could rise as high as 1,256 once all cases are finalized.

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

The Teaching Gene

Dani B. Langiven
VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

Apparently my December column created quite a stir. I discovered that my administration received some unsolicited phone calls. Why wouldn't those people contact me? Clearly I am the author of my columns, not my administration. My email is attached to every column I write. Feel free to contact me, if you do or do not like what I have to say. I find it completely ridiculous and juvenile for people to bypass the source. What outcome were they hoping to attain? I digress.

Surprisingly, on my end, there hasn't been a day that's gone by that one or more of my colleagues have pulled me aside and, in whispered voices, thanked me for being the brave voice for how they feel about the state of our educational system. Colleagues across the district shook my hand, slapped my back, hugged me, and expressed relief that the real face of education was finally revealed. Former students and parents have reached out and praised me for the influence I've had on their children or themselves and hope that things improve for both teachers and students.

I didn't receive any negative comments in person, private messages, emails, and on Facebook except for one person who said, "They (teachers) knew what they were signing up for. Suck it up." This is an incredibly ignorant statement. Veteran teachers once enjoyed the luxury of reimbursed mandatory professional development classes, having pens, pencils, tissues and other necessary items for the classrooms provided along with some level of autonomy, creativity, and fun in creating and conducting meaningful lessons for our students. Now? We are told we have to take a class, but it is on our dime. We have to be fingerprinted at our expense. Sorry, we have no money for supplies; feel free to get your own. You have to teach this, within this time frame, with little to no training, move on to the next lesson even if some children don't "get it" and make sure they all improve their test scores. It is nothing like it used to be.

And new educators? Well, there's no way they can even begin to fathom what being a teacher encompasses until they step into a classroom. As a result is that up to 50% of new teachers drop out of the vocation within the first 5 years and many veteran teachers are saying, "I'm not sure I can do this until retirement." Teacher turnaround costs the education system billions of dollars every year. Lack of support over discipline from administration, feeling expendable, and the near non-existent autonomy in teaching practices are the number one complaints of educators and reasons they are leaving.

Let me make it perfectly clear: I LOVE teaching, as do most of the professionals who have chosen to become educators. We are teachers because it is in our DNA. We have the teaching gene. And just like any relationship in a person's life, teachers choose subjects and ages that they can relate to and are passionate about. When a teacher is removed from the age and subject that they are meant to instruct, it is like being removed from your own home and family only to be replaced by another. It feels foreign, awkward, and uncomfortable. Still teachers are being put into age groups and subject matter that makes them feel exactly that.

The threat of government take-overs have caused administration into thinking that it is okay to do this in order to raise test scores. Standardized testing has taken the excitement and spontaneity out of instruction. There seems to be a blatant disregard for creative and critical thinking, and individualism in order to pass a test that will not, in anyway, translate well for college bound students or those who will go directly into the work force.

Administrators lay just as much victim as the faculty to the incredibly asinine, and poorly thought out federally mandated changes in education. Administrators are too frightened to fight the system and are attempting to do the best they can to create an optimum environment for teaching and learning with the tools forced upon them that don't get the job done. They believe that their backs are to the wall. If their backs are to the wall, then they are standing on the backs of their faculty whose bellies are to the floor and there seems to be no way out for any of us because everyone is afraid to speak up.

Change will not come from local school systems alone. The community must get involved. Those in the private sector have become too complacent. They think that the federal and state governments have their children's best interests in mind. Do they really? If you think so, stay silent. If you don't, speak up! The community needs to reach out at the local and federal governments that are systematically dismantling teachers' abilities to affectively educate our children. Instead of crying foul on someone who is simply trying to shed light on a system that has lost sight of our country's most precious commodity-our children, use your anger and be called to action. Have any of you done anything to make a change or help make things better for our children and the people to whom you entrust their care and education, but are so quick to blame when things seem to go wrong.

Parents and local businesses need to get involved in education and it can be small with big results. Parents can volunteer at their child's school. Do you have any idea how invaluable it is for a parent to come in once a week to make copies now that consumable workbooks are no longer provided? It frees up teacher's precious time so that they can concentrate on lessons and the needs of each of their students. Local businesses could donate supplies: pens, pencils, tissues, hand sanitizer, erasers, dry erase markers, notebooks, lunch boxes, post-it notes, and so much more to open up monies in school budgets for much needed supplies not just for classrooms and teachers, but for students who can't afford these items for themselves. Instead of pointing fingers at those of us who are doing the best we can with as little as possible, lend a hand to help as much as possible. Be the change that is needed to improve education for everyone who is involved.

I love teaching. I adore my students. I value my colleagues, but education is becoming something none of us recognize. Those of us in the profession are working ourselves to the bone and many into early retirement because the demands are overwhelming. I implore our private sector citizens to get involved. I ask our administrators to leave teachers in the age group and academic area in which they excel. Working together will undoubtedly be beneficial for everyone.

Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

Beneath the Surface

Emotion, Manipulation, and Presidential Politics

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Ever since the end of World War II gave rise to television, Democrats and Republicans have campaigned for president using two different general messages. Democrats offered an idealism that would evoke words like "Camelot," "hope," and "change" while Republicans offered a realism reflected in words like "trust" and "leadership".

In 1960, John F. Kennedy captured Americans' hearts with his youth and charm while Richard Nixon went for their minds. Those who heard the Nixon-Kennedy presidential debate on radio overwhelmingly thought Nixon won it, but those who saw it on TV believed the exact opposite. While Nixon showed leadership with knowledge of facts, Kennedy displayed coolness with style and charisma. In 1964, Lyndon Johnson campaigned on creating a "Great Society" by radical social "change," while Barry Goldwater's slogan was, "In your heart you know he is right." In 1980, Jimmy Carter warned America would take a significant step "backward" if the 'dangerous' Ronald Reagan were to be elected. Reagan, on the other hand, focused on "leading" America through the recession and cold war with advertisement tag lines like, "It's nice to be liked, but it's more important to be respected." In 1992, G.H.W. Bush repeated the mantra "Who do you trust?" Meanwhile Bill Clinton coyly bit his lip and kept repeating the mantra of "hope" and "change".

In 2000, George W. Bush kept emphasizing his desire to "lead" the American people and to "bring back honor and dignity to the White House," while Al Gore repeated to the middle class, "I will fight for you!" When Al Gore saw himself down to Bush in the late polling, he decided to surprise America with "the kiss". At the Democrat National Convention on prime-time TV, strategically in front of the camera Gore planted what seemed to be a 2-minute kiss on his wife Tipper, sending a message to female America that he was a good husband and "loved" his wife. This energized the female vote and brought him back into a tie with Bush. After he officially lost the election, he divorced his wife.

In 2008, when Hillary began to realize this kid from Chicago, Barack Obama, might steal the NH primary from her, we got "the cry." It was similar to Al Gore's "the kiss" in as much as it moved the female vote enough to put Hillary over the top and keep her hope alive. However, Obama's "hope" and "change" rhetoric was too much for her campaign to handle. When Obama coupled these buzzwords with "Yes we can," John McCain had no chance. In 2012, when Mitt Romney was up in the polls a few days before the election, no one expected Hurricane Sandy to bring us "the hug". But there it was on national TV. Like "the kiss" and "the cry", "the hug" turned the race around and catapulted Barack Obama to a second term. Some people dispute "the hug" as being more like a loose embrace, but regardless, Chris Christie gave America one last image of Obama acting "presidential" before voting day, giving him the appearance of a knight swooping in on his white horse to save a NJ damsel in distress.

This brings us to 2016 - the year to throw everything I just mentioned out the window. This time it's not the Democrats playing on your emotions by offering you false hope and change. This time the emotion is anger and the psychological manipulation of shallow slogans belongs to a Republican. The hope and change of Obama has given way to "tremendous things" and "make America great again" of Trump. Trump's campaign is the flip-side of Obama's, and many Republicans love it. Donald Trump is the angry father coming home from work to severely discipline his kids, after the mother (Obama) with her displaced compassion let them run rough-shod for eight years. Yet, like Obama, Trump offers no specifics with his slogans. He has recently changed his stands on many critical issues without explanation and his "refreshingly" straightforward approach includes vulgar insults to those who challenge him.

It is understandable that eight years of shallow politically-correct liberalism, which has solidified our current culture of death, would elicit a strong reaction. However, it is never good to replace one extreme with the other. Responsible voters act on reason, not emotion.

So what is reasonable? History shows that 40% of voters automatically vote Democrat and 40% Republican. The remaining 20%, stereotypically non-political women raising children ("soccer moms"), decide elections. If the goal is to beat Hillary and stop the hemorrhaging of a once great nation, here is the question: Of the three viable Republican candidates - Trump, Cruz, and Rubio - which would this demographic be more apt to vote for over Hillary? There is your candidate.

Think reasonably. Vote Rubio.

The *PULSE!*

Lowell… My little piece of America

John MacDonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

As the Presidential Primaries descend upon us and the courtship of each candidate's platform promises percolate in our minds; I ask myself what I'd like to see here in Lowell and what will make a difference as a result of all of this campaigning. Whether it be a Republican or Democrat that ultimately wins the election, the most important office in the land and the world; the question is… What do I want?

I want a productive opportunity and change for my family and my little quarter acre in Lowell. So how will this important election actually affect the people in my home? Hmm…

So let's see. My home breaks down like this… Two adults, two kids under 18 and one dog. My wife and I live in our own home and we have one daughter who's a sophomore in high school and another daughter in middle school. We have a mortgage, own one car and have a loan on another. We have the regular bills and we try our best to save. We have saved as much as we can for the kids to have a decent shot at affording college. We have saved for retirement and skimp on most frills in life, hoping that we will retire at a decent age, so we can enjoy our golden years. We don't have any lofty retirement plans. Twenty some odd years from now (unlike the commercials that portray that sixty something guy retiring, buying a vineyard in California, while holding a wine glass in the air… yada, yada), we'd like something simple. Perhaps a small condo down south and something similar up north, when the day comes. I think that sounds simple and straightforward… Wouldn't you say?

I realize as I write this column, some will say I am more fortunate than others. They are probably right. Some families, even in my own neighborhood struggle every month to make ends meet. Never mind save, they struggle to survive. Survival has become an all too common theme in every neighborhood in America. It's unacceptable that the theme of survival and the acceptance by some that circumstances might not change… is frightening. The glimmer of hope and opportunity we're always promised has become a fantasy, rather than a reality for far too many people.

So which party and or candidate will allow me to have some degree (if any) of confidence that my children will be able to someday afford college and become gainfully employed? Which candidate will balance the amount of taxes I pay with the opportunity to save? Which candidate will help create an environment that will be conducive to job creation? Which candidate will work towards reducing the national debt and will keep America safe for this generation and future generations? Which party and candidate will do something or anything at all that will improve my opportunities to make my own dreams for an average and happy life come true? Which candidate is going to give my kids and yours a shot at the American Dream? Which candidate is going to leave the most amount of money in my wallet, so I can save and dream or just survive?

Like you… I work too hard to just accept survival. I want to prosper.

Will this Presidential election put the country in a positive direction that will trickle down to my little quarter acre in Lowell? Right now I can say that I really don't have a great sense of confidence (wrong direction) in the direction of the country, which in fact puts me in with the majority of people that responded to that question in recent polls. So, am I optimistic about this election? Yes, I'm optimistic… Not sure why. It probably has more to do with my own cheery disposition than it has to do with anything any of the Presidential

LOWELL: PAGE 27

The Opioid Crisis: Legislature Partners with Baker - Polito Administration

Linda Dean Campbell
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

The House has finalized legislation targeting the opioid crisis that is a compilation of Governor Baker's bill, a Senate bill, and a House bill. These bills will be crafted into one single bill by a legislative conference committee, presented to the Legislature to be passed before going to the Governor for his approval or veto.

One high hurtle in crafting this legislation was the need to get the medical community more engaged in addressing this crisis. Developing sound legislation to help address this most complex and horrific tragedy was by necessity a long and meticulous process. I want to thank the Baker Administration for stepping up and matching the efforts put forth by the Legislature to bring the medical community into the process. Requiring the medical community to do more presented a personal challenge for our Governor because he has close personal ties to a great many in our medical community.

The bill contains many provisions – it will limit the amount of first prescriptions; require emergency room and other physicians to report drug overdoses to the patient's primary care doctor so they don't prescribe more opioids immediately after their patient overdoses (this was an amendment I filed); it requires hospital emergency room clinicians to offer, seek and promote follow-up care for patients with opioid addiction – which will get our medical/pharmaceutical community more fully engaged in dealing with this crisis. Finally, it will add emphasis to educational and preventive measures.

Community Compacts

Just recently, Lieutenant Governor Polito visited Methuen to sign a Community Compact for the communities of Methuen, North Andover, Andover, and Salisbury. In exchange for utilizing best practices and sharing services regionally, communities will be provided with additional support structures to help with the many aspects of community development. This is clearly a win for our taxpayers and is another example of very positive collaboration between the Governor and the Legislature.

While there shall always be differences of opinion between our State's Legislature and the Governor's Administration we cannot afford inertia and adversity.

GOAL Condemns Lowell Council for Imposing "Poll Tax" Policy on Lawful Gun Owners

The Gun Owners Action League (GOAL) is condemning the actions of the Lowell City Council who, on Tuesday, January 19, voted to approve what amounts to a "Poll Tax" on lawful gun owners. As many Americans know, the 'Poll Tax' was used as a means to discourage certain sectors of society from taking part in the right to vote. This new firearms licensing policy accomplishes the same goal by placing restrictions on a gun license unless a citizen complies with these new demands by the city.

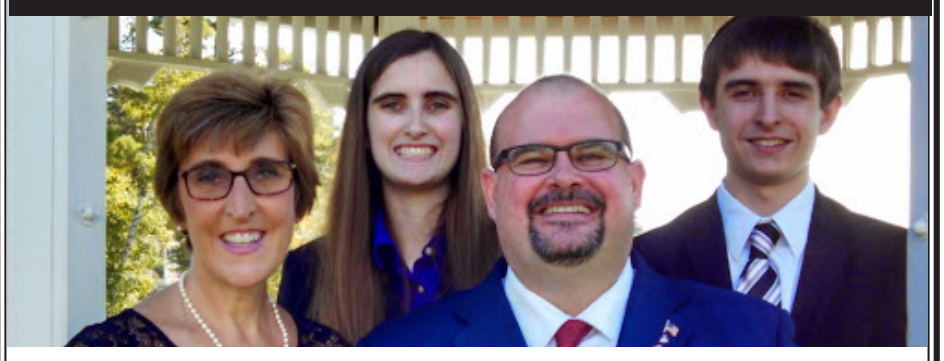
The new policy mandates: 1) expensive additional training, 2) a written "supplement" essay on why the citizen wishes to obtain a gun license to exercise his/her civil rights, 3) provide documentation on military or law enforcement service, 4) letters of recommendation concerning "good character and emotional stability", and much more. All of these mandates are not required or supported by state law and GOAL believes they are purely designed to discourage, or outright prevent, lawful citizens from exercising their civil rights.

"Massachusetts is among the most restrictive states in the nation when it comes to licensing our civil right to keep and bear arms," said Jim Wallace, GOAL's Executive Director. "There is no documented evidence that licensed gun owners are a threat to public safety. That being the case, there is no problem that exists that would warrant such outrageous measures. Our conclusion is that the Lowell City Council wants to prevent lawful citizens from exercising their civil rights and has implemented what amounts to a "Poll Tax" for lawful gun owners."

Because of the continued abuses of what GOAL considers rogue municipalities, GOAL is seeking to file emergency legislation to drastically change the definitions and powers of "Licensing Authorities".

Jim Wallace further stated, "It is a shame that this has to be done. The vast majority of local authorities follow the state law and are fine to work with. Sadly, there are some out there that still don't understand that the Second Amendment is a civil right. As a result, we must do what needs to be done to protect those citizens wishing to exercise those rights."

HAVE YOU CREATED A PLAN TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY IN THE EVENT YOU ARE NO LONGER HERE?



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Lawrence Exchange Club Honors Valley Heroes

Lawrence Exchange Club President, Francisco Santiago, Lawrence Police Officer Angel Lopez, and Police Chief James Fitzpatrick who nominated Lopez for his work in reducing the stolen car rate in Lawrence, and solving other crimes while investigating stolen car cases. Photo right: Lawrence Firefighter Ed Burke, Lieutenant Ryan Lavallee, Lt. Matthew Nadeau and Firefighter Jesus Flores were honored for their heroic work on November 20th, at 266 Andover St. for carrying an unconscious woman out of the building and saving her life. At Right is Lawrence Fire Chief Mahoney.

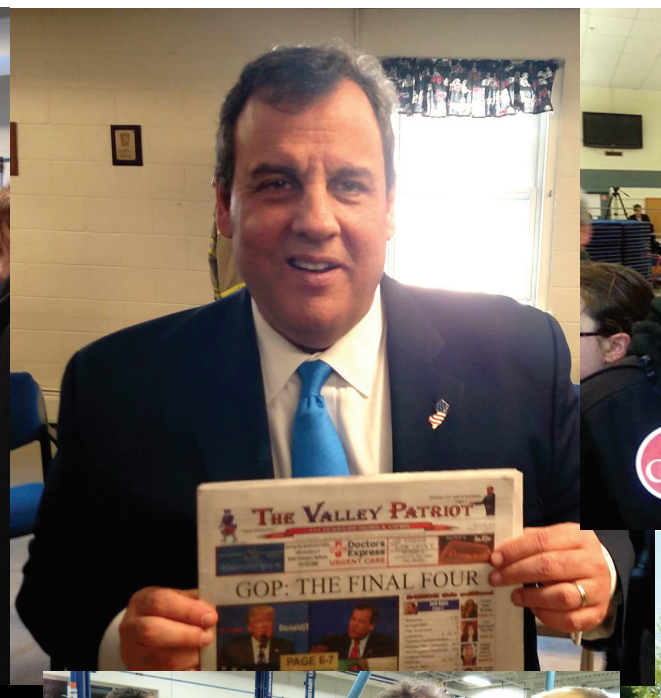
Massachusetts State Trooper Kyle Flanagan, Lawrence Exchange Club President, Francisco Santiago, North Andover Police Officer Michael Gilligan and Captain Charles Gray. The officers were honored for rescuing a jumper in the Merrimack River after they plunged off the Rt. 495 bridge. Andover Firefighter-EMT's David Eulie and Jameson Lockhart for bringing a man back to life after collapsing at the Andover Feaster Five Road Race. They are pictured with Andover Fire Chief Mike Mansfield

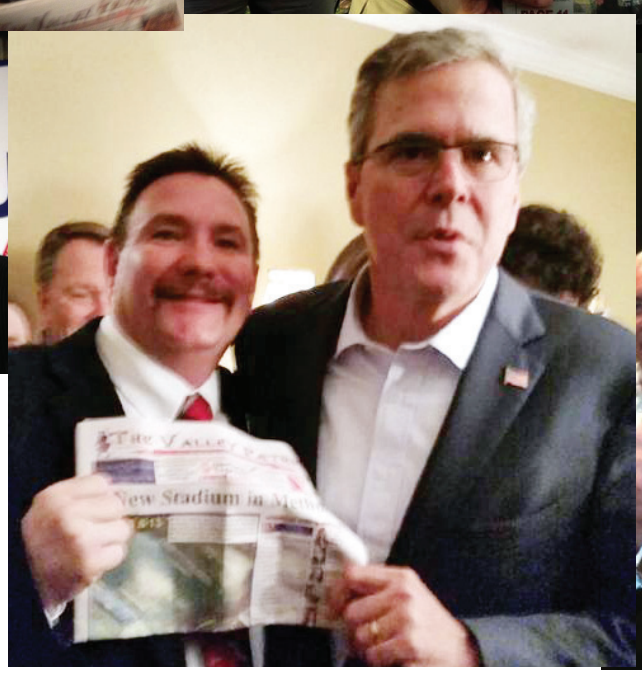
North Andover Firefighter-EMT's Matthew Lacolla, Jeffrey Judge, and James White were honored by the Exchange Club for bringing someone back to life at the scene of a car accident on Osgood Street last year. They are pictured with Lawrence Exchange Club President, Francisco Santiago (2nd from left), and Fire Chief Andrew Melnikas who was also honored for his years of service. Melnikas is retiring next month.

Lawrence General Hospital EMT, Nathan King was honored by the Lawrence Exchange Club for his efforts to save a life. The City of Lawrence contracts with the hospital for ambulance services.

Detective Peter Remming and Officer Kevin Aufiero were honored by the Lawrence Exchange Club for their for their investigation into a home invasion on North Main St. where a 16-year-old-girl was tied to a chair and robbed in her home.

The Valley Patriot on the Presidential Campaign Trail





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Ethics Commission Accuses Stoughton Town Moderator Howard Hansen

Paid Himself for Town Printing Done at His OWN Company

Hansen repeatedly violated several sections of the conflict of interest law between 2009 and 2014 by directing Town printing business to his own printing company

The Enforcement Division of the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission alleges that Howard Hansen, the Town of Moderator of Stoughton, violated G.L. c. 268A, the conflict of interest law, by directing Town printing business to his own printing company.

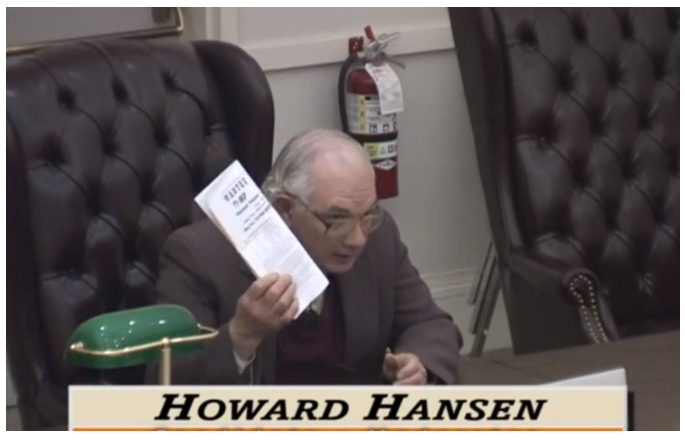
According to the allegation, Hansen has served as the elected, paid Town Moderator since about 1992.

Hansen is also the sole proprietor and owner of Hansen Brothers Printing, which has provided printing services to the Town since approximately 1968.

Between 2009 and 2014, Hansen, as Town Moderator, repeatedly contracted with Hansen Brothers Printing and/or himself to perform printing work for the Town.

Hansen did not obtain Town approval or obtain quotes from other potential printing vendors.

In his private capacity, Hansen submitted bills to the Town for printing services provided by Hansen Brothers Printing. As Town Moderator, Hansen signed the Town paperwork authorizing payment to Hansen Brothers Printing and/or himself for printing services.



Hansen Brothers Printing and/or Hansen individually received a total of approximately $19,000 from the Town for printing work during this time.

Section 19 of the conflict of interest law prohibits a municipal employee from participating as such an employee in a particular matter in which, to his knowledge, he has a financial interest.

Section 20 of the law prohibits a municipal employee from having a financial interest in a contract made by a municipal agency of the same town. Section 23(b)(2) (in effect prior to September 29, 2009) and 23(b)(2)(ii) (in effect after September 29, 2009), both prohibit a municipal employee from knowingly, or with reason to know, using or attempting to use his official position to secure for himself unwarranted privileges or exemptions which are of substantial value and not properly available to similarly situated individuals.

According to the Ethics Commission, Hansen violated section 19 each time he made the decisions as Town Moderator to hire and authorize payment to himself and/or Hansen Brothers Printing for printing work for the Town. Hansen repeatedly violated section 20 by, as sole proprietor of Hansen Brothers Printing, having a financial interest in each contract for printing services between the Town and Hansen Brothers Printing.

Hansen repeatedly violated sections 23(b)(2) or 23(b)(2)(ii) by failing to seek competitive quotes for the printing work and by instead choosing to deal exclusively with his own company. As stated in the OTSC, "Other printing businesses could not seek to obtain this printing work because it was not advertised or put out to bid, and no quotes for the work were sought from other vendors."

The Commission will schedule a hearing on the matter within 90 days.

BOOK REVIEW: Unraveling My Father's Suicide

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER/AUTHOR

Local author Kathleen LaPlante's book, "Unraveling My Father's Suicide" is an emotionally heart-wrenching story about her life experiences after the loss of her father to suicide on her 21st birthday while she was away at college.

Her journey for answers courageously brings you through her mental health struggles, including the insane maze of the mental health-care system, her spiritual journey as a Catholic, and her family journey of learning and understanding the history of suicide in her lineage.

This is not a comfortable subject for anyone to talk about, or hear about. The misconceptions most people have about people with mental health issues and/or past suicide attempts usually makes people flee the subject. But, this book makes the uncomfortable matters at hand much more comfortable as she peppers both fond and not so fond memories of her father when she was a child.

Having had a strained relationship with her dad, who drank heavily and abused her mother, Kathleen's understanding of her own pain, guilt, and doubt, exposes her own feelings and failings in a way that the reader will be thinking about this book for years after reading it.

Kathleen is compelling in her honesty. Even on the first page of the introduction, where she admits that everyone's experiences and memories of her life events may be different, her open admission that her account might, somewhere in it's content, not be 100% perfect, is refreshing.

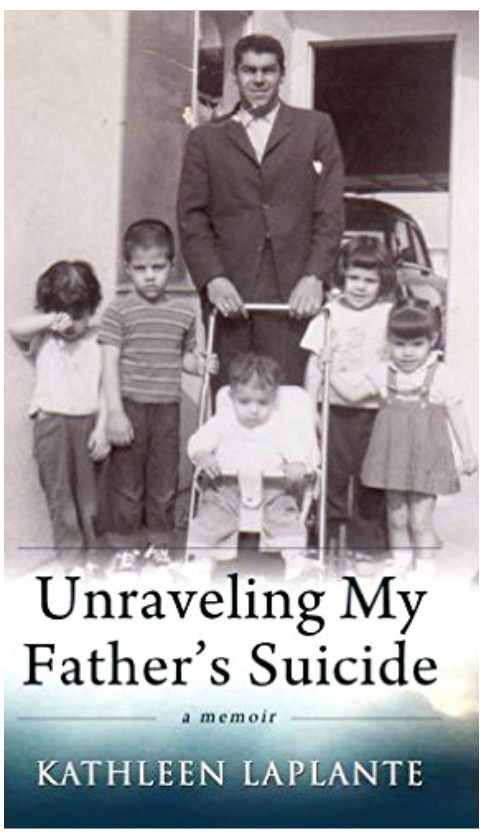
Especially in a world where people who have different memories of an event usually end up in a battle over who "lied" rather than a discussion of who may just be remembering wrong.

Knowing this, Kathleen went to members of her family and talked to them about her memories to not only refresh her memories but, to verify if she was remembering everything correctly. She took great pains to present an honest and revealing account of her childhood and the life-changing event of her dad's suicide.

"Unraveling My Father's Suicide" is a wonderfully written book that is easy to read.

More importantly, it is easy to conceptualize in your minds and heart, as she painfully taps into the love-hate relationship she had with her father, his past, and what he had done.

This book is about learning and loving after a life altering experience at such a young age and how that carried through an adult life fraught with a search for answers.



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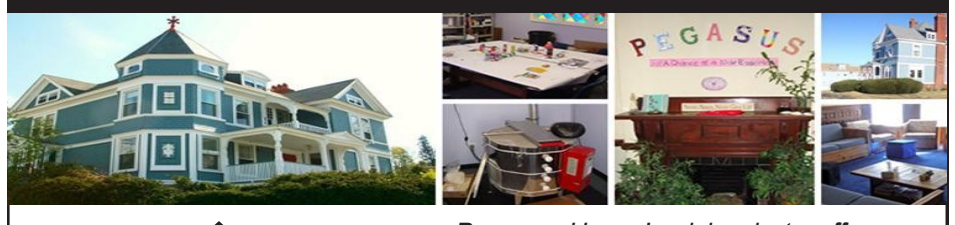

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Why I Voted for Chris Christie for President

DJ Bettencourt
VALLEY PATRIOT NH COLUMNIST

Granite Staters are very fortunate to have many exceptionally qualified and accomplished Republican candidates to choose from when they cast their ballots in the New Hampshire Primary next month. From successful business leaders to tireless conservative fighters in the United States Senate to tax-cutting governors. These leaders and their accomplishments stand in stark contrast to the Obama Administration and Hillary Clinton.

However, after careful and thorough deliberation, I believe that one candidate stands out among the rest. A leader with a long track record of delivering results under difficult circumstances and one that our country needs to make us economically prosperous at home and will re-establish our leadership abroad. That candidate is Governor Chris Christie.

Our country faces a litany of serious challenges and how those challenges are addressed will greatly impact the lives of future generations. As I write this, our national debt stands at $18.8 trillion and has more than doubled since Barack Obama took office. This debt is a theft from future generations who will be left to pay it off.

Now is the time for a true fiscal conservative and Governor Christie's record in New Jersey shows that he is a strong executive leader that has achieved tangible and substantive conservative reforms in a heavily Democratic state. He has produced and successfully implemented a balanced budget every year he has been governor. He did so by cutting spending, implementing pension reform, reducing government and fundamentally reforming the way government does business. This approach and a no-nonsense demeanor are desperately needed in Washington.

Further, Governor Christie is a proven and reliable tax cutter. Notably, he overhauled New Jersey's tax code and cut property taxes as well as taxes on small businesses. He also vetoed all attempts by Democrats, who dominate New Jersey's legislature, to raise taxes. According to Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform, Governor Christie vetoed more tax increases than any other governor in modern American history. This has helped improve New Jersey's economic standing and grow jobs. New Jersey's unemployment rate was 9.8% when Governor Christie took office. Today it stands at 5.3%, which equates to 224,100 new jobs.

Governor Christie has also been strong on reforming education. His accomplishments include tenure reform, implementation of merit pay for teachers, a growth of charter schools. Additionally, he has been a long-standing advocate for school choice, which will empower parents to make the best educational decisions for their children and give students in the worst preforming school districts an option to attend a better school. He has also come to appreciate that Common Core is not working for our students and has led the charge to implement higher education standards that come from teachers, parents and local school boards.

Finally, Governor Christie isn't a "johnny-come-lately" on fighting the heroin epidemic that is ravaging New England and destroying families across America. For several years Governor Christie has enacted reforms that de-stigmatize substance abuse struggles and place an emphasis on treatment and recovery. Like Manchester, New Hampshire Mayor, Ted Gatsas, he has championed the use of drug courts in New Jersey, which give first time, nonviolent offenders the opportunity to get the treatment they need rather than serving jail time. This has proven effective in achieving better chances at recovery. His reforms have undoubtedly saved countless numbers of lives.

Along with this track record, Governor Christie has a forward-looking plan to again make America the economic juggernaut of the world. With America strong at home, we will be able to re-establish our leadership abroad. Governor Christie will restore the trust of our allies and strike fear in our enemies. In the end, Governor Christie is the person that I know will work every day to keep my family safe from those that would do us harm.

I am proud to support Governor Chris Christie for President and believe that he is worthy of your consideration and your vote.

D.J. Bettencourt served as a State Representative in the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 2005 to 2012 and was the House Majority Leader for the 2011-2012 legislative term. He currently serves as the vice chairman of the Economic Development Action Committee in Salem, NH.

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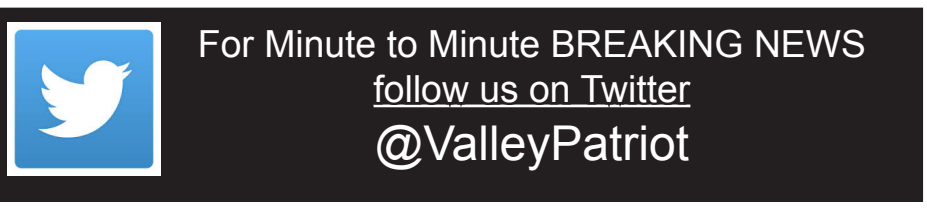

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POWERBALL: FROM PAGE 6

productive lottery system.

"It's really great to hear Hasmukh's story, I think we need to hear more stories like that in the news."

WHERE DOES ALL THAT MONEY GO?

Sweeney was appointed as the state's Lottery Director by State Treasurer Deb Goldburg last November, after serving three months as the interim director.

"I don't think people realize that 42% of every dollar spent on the lottery goes to local aid. What we do is the opposite of what most government agencies do. Usually a city or town will get some kind of government funding with strings attached, where they have to use the money for specific purposes. But, the lottery in Massachusetts is the reverse of that. This is unrestricted local aid. The money we give back to cities and towns can be used in any way the local mayors, town managers, or city councilors and selectmen see fit. They can use it to hire teachers, cops, firefighters, buy new fire trucks, pave roads, whatever the individual need of that town happens to be."

COST OF LOTTERY OPERATIONS LOWEST IN THE COUNTRY

"People are surprised when they learn that only 2% of the revenue brought in by the lottery is spent on lottery operations. That's the lowest in the country. On average, 72% of all lottery revenue goes directly to consumers for lottery prizes. Massachusetts also has the highest payout in the country, which is pretty amazing."

Sweeney said that the reason Massachusetts always has the highest payouts and lowest costs for operations are because of the way the lottery was initially set up.

"From its inception, the vision set out by the state for the lottery, has always been to have high payouts and low costs. We have been leaders in the country as far as prize payouts go. That's the way the legislature wanted it. I think for game consumers in Massachusetts, that means they are getting better odds."

HOW POWERBALL WORKS

Powerball is a multi-state (44) lottery game that includes Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Players pick six numbers, or can have a random set of 6 numbers chosen by computer called a "quick pick". The Powerball numbers are drawn in Tallahassee, Florida twice a week. If nobody hits the jackpot, the money collected rolls over to the next drawing.

"The multi jurisdiction games, like MegaMillions and Powerball, come about when we are approached by other states or organizations with particular game offerings," Sweeney added.

"Then we will go through the internal process of vetting what the game is, what controls are in place, the payouts, etc. We also look at game integrity."

"What we see with the public and the media is that once a jackpot reaches $400M-$500M, it seems to suddenly get the attention of the news media. At that point we really don't have to do anything. It takes on a life of its own. It gets talked about everywhere. People talk about it at work, with their friends, it builds its' own excitement."

TACKLING GAMBLING ADDICTION

"The State Treasurer has been very focused and very strong on sending the message to players that responsible gaming is important. Just because a jackpot reaches a high payout, people shouldn't be going outside their budget to play the lottery. People should not spend above their means."

Sweeney says that the lottery office works with The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

"We are active with them and we also meet regularly with public health officials for people who have unhealthy gambling addictions. In fact, I'm going to a meeting today concerning public health issues for gambling addicts. Just yesterday, we sent out messages on social media reminding people not to bet above what they can afford. We also provide information for people with compulsive gambling issues, including posting links on social media, providing access to help lines, online mechanisms they can use and information on how to get in touch with organizations if they think they need help.

Sweeney also cautioned players not to give lottery tickets of any kind to anyone under 18 years old.

Salisbury Marina Owner Fined for Failure to Prepare Safety Measures

CRUZ: FROM PAGE 7

undue financial tax burden on American consumers and hurt American businesses. Let's not forgot that American automobile giants Ford and General Motors import their parts from Mexico.

Ted Cruz understands the importance of preserving and protecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding American citizens to own firearms to protect themselves and their families.

Finally, Ted Cruz understands the importance of securing our borders by building a wall on our Southern border and strengthening our military to make Americans safe while at the same time, opposing illegal NSA spying on Americans. A President Cruz will push to end all Federal funding for sanctuary cities, like Lawrence, which provide safe havens for illegal immigrants entering the country.

The stakes this year are too high. If we do not reverse our current course I believe that America will be a far different (and worse) country than the one our parents knew and we have loved. To win in 2016, we need to bring together Libertarians, traditional conservatives, Evangelicals, and Reagan Democrats. I believe that Ted Cruz is in the best position to be able to unite these factions.

It is for these reasons that I urge all Valley Patriot readers to consider voting for Ted Cruz for President in the upcoming Republican primaries. I am proud to join with former Georgia Republican Congressman Bob Barr, the 2008 Libertarian Presidential candidate (who I voted for that year and who is leading Libertarians for Cruz), and former NH Senator Bob Smith in voting for Ted Cruz for President in 2016!

LAWRENCE: FROM PAGE 11

Clerk to do something? Ironically, Mr. Maldonado is a staunch supporter of putting nonresidents at the back of the line when it comes to city employment.

The fact that Mr. Maldonado is now worried about following the council rules is laughable given his lack of regard for them during his tenure as Council President. I'm not sure he ever presided over a meeting where there were no violations of Council rules.

I hear that William Lantigua is back in town, just in time to "reconnect" with his good friend Justo Garcia, the former city garage worker whose larceny trial is scheduled to take place this spring. Lantigua must be getting ready for a possible recall election as he recently registered to vote at 65 Park St. as Williams M. Lantigua and neglected to remove his Boxford St. registration.

The newly elected District A School Committee member Kemal Bozkurt works full time at the Lawrence Public Library. Not only is this a conflict of interest, a constituent called him outside of business hours and Bozkurt suggested that the person stop by the library sometime to talk with him. Now I realize that School Committee members should expect calls during business hours, but for a city employee to invite someone to come to their municipal job to discuss School Committee matters is pushing it a little too far.

The never-ending recall saga: Are you sick of this yet? The second recall never turned in any petitions by their deadline. As far as the first recall, it appears that the Board of Registrar's will be hearing objections from both sides, one side wanting names put on the recall petitions and the other wanting names removed. The recall leaders want people who signed where they lived as opposed to where they were registered to vote to be counted. They were "tricked" because the petitions said to sign the address at which you reside. This evidently proved confusing for many residents who don't live at the address listed on their voter registrations. I wonder how many of these people chose to not update the address on their voter registrations for political reasons?

LEFT: FROM PAGE 7

assembly and make informed decisions, these protestors cringe at the thought of any real discourse. They are effectively creating a chilling effect for differing perspectives, policies and opinions.

On campuses, Radical Leftists deny funding to student newspapers questioning their positions, physically intimidate student reporters and dissenters, sign petitions to remove opposing faculty members and demand buildings and statues named after historical leaders be removed because they are deemed too racist, sexist, warlike, etc. But again, this is precisely where I disagree with the Radical Left. I want to read and learn more about Woodrow Wilson's racism, that Thomas Jefferson and Washington owned slaves, that women were discriminated against so often and that massacres occurred at Wounded Knee and other times in our history. If these buildings and statues and books open a dialogue, that is exactly what I desire. Because I have had no problem over the years reading the writings of Malcolm X, Howard Zinn, Karl Marx, and others. Not necessarily because I always agree with them, but because I don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Unfortunately, while many radicals fail to read anything other than unfiltered blogs and gather information from unverified electronic sources, they have no hesitation in claiming vast conspiracies right now are operating in concert across our nation to kill minorities in cold blood on a daily basis. They have no qualms accusing conservatives of being Nazis, which is contrary to any reasonable understanding of history. But at the end of the day, the members of the Radical Left are the ones who seek to Balkanize this great nation, that through all its flaws and wrongs over the years, has welcomed millions of immigrants, has fought a bloody and costly civil war, has elected an African American the most powerful man on the planet twice and offers liberties and constitutional protections most nations can only dream about.

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TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

Home is Where Memories Are Made

In my grandparents' house lie many memories of our family's past, both good and bad, both light-hearted and melancholy. No matter what the circumstances were, the house was always full of warm people; family and friends overflowing from every door. Much has changed since then. Now, a new family dwells in that house that was once a sanctuary for my many relatives, but our memories will always be present there and in the hearts of those who knew it.

The yellow house lies on a green plot of land. A red brick path leads to the front door. Once, the timber-beamed family room greeted its guests with many interesting objects that she had brought back from her native land: decorated terra-cotta pots, rustic woodcarvings, miniature leather-trimmed animal figures. Her books crammed large bookcases, stacked to the ceiling and dangling over the sides. (She traded school for marriage at sixteen, but she remained a passionate reader.) Where company was not serenaded by Julio Iglesias, via Nana's CD player, the crooning sound of Frank Sinatra could be heard from Papa's radio. My father's parents' house was constantly replete with laughter and merriment, augmented by many visiting uncles, aunts and cousins. This made for an environment that epitomized the cozy warmth of an all-American home. An incredibly family-oriented bunch, we grew up spending every minute of our free time at Nana and Papa's. A literal home-away-from-home, most of my childhood stories find their setting at Rowley Bridge Road.

When Nana passed away, the house seemed empty, with an inconceivable possibility of being whole again; but after the sadness had been quelled, the conviviality of the house returned. It was never the same for my grandfather, however; for each anniversary of Nana's death was a reminder of the desolation he felt without her. The rest of the family still made the house feel cozy when they came, but it was indeed incomparable to the times of old.

My grandmother was an extraordinarily talented self-taught artist. She did not sell her paintings. Instead, she modestly produced masterpieces that would only be exhibited in front of her own family. Nana's paintings adorn the walls of our families' houses till this day. In her paintings can be found portraits of majestic gauchos, Indian children in colorful native garb, scenes of rustic ranches in the countryside, and even western landscapes chockfull with galloping horses. She made my bed quilt, and it reminds me of her every night.

I had just turned 3 when she died, and what remains of her in my mind are mere memories of memories that my parents have recounted over the years. This leaves much to the imagination for me. There are certain questions that I would love to ask her, and I often contemplate her probable answers, wondering if any of my guesses are anything close to right. I often wonder about Eva Teresa de Bernardo, not only an accomplished, self-educated immigrant woman, but a grandmother I never really got the chance to know.

Now that my grandfather has passed away, my family will never again have any shared moments in that house. Though our family's story has come to an end at Rowley Bridge and a new family is just beginning their own, that yellow house with the red brick path will forever be home to the fondest and most monumental recollections of my childhood. The memories will remain, and will forever do so, for the love my family has for each other cannot be outdone by death.

As I think about that yellow house and all the laughter and joy it has seen over the years, I start to wonder who will inherit my own house after my siblings and I finally leave the nest for good, and my parents gradually move on to "warmer pastures". I think about the new couple raising their family with their different customs and traditions, where my family once shared Christmas dinner. A new child sleeping in what was once my bedroom where the most embarrassing of secrets were shared between friends, and the most shocking confessions made in hushed whispers while my parents slept a room away. I am comforted as I think about my grandparents' house because I remember that time can keep charging forward, but it cannot erase the memories made at home, which will be cherished for lifetimes to come.

TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING

The X-Files: The Truth Is Still Out There

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Millions of Americans eagerly awaited the revival of The X-Files. Count me among them. January 24th marked the return of series to television after a 14-year absence. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprised their iconic roles as Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully.

The X-Files ran from 1993-2002 for 198 episodes. The series was one of the original series on the fledgling FOX network and was recognized with numerous awards over the years including 2 Golden Globes for Best Drama Series in 1994 and 1997, and Golden Globes for each of its lead actors in 1996 as well as an Emmy for Gillian Anderson in 1997. The series also spawned 2 feature films.

With the cult following that the show has, it was only natural that in this day of reboots and revivals that The X-Files was revived as well.

While the premiere episode was a little rough around the edges, it did deal with some of the great mythology surrounding the series.

Our heroes have changed over the years they've been gone. Their relationship has cooled and they don't see each other as frequently. Scully has returned to medicine, as we saw in the 2008 film I Want To Believe. In the opener, Mulder, who has been completely off the radar, is contacted by FBI Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and asked to meet with a conspiracy crazy radio host (Joel McHale). Mulder convinces Scully to join him. The host tells the agents wild stories of alien abduction and introduces them to a woman who may or may not have been abducted herself. It all ends with an appearance by the agent's nemesis, the mysterious Cigarette Smoking Man. Like I said, the first episode was a bit rough, but it was a way to set up the return of these characters to the FBI and the re-opening of The X-Files.

The second and third episodes were classic X-Files. In the 2nd episode, titled Founders Mutation, Mulder and Scully investigate a scientist at a genetic research facility who commits suicide due to loud noises only he can hear. It had lots of classic X-Files moments, reminding the fans why we loved this show in the first place.

The 3rd episode, Mulder and Scully Meet The Were –Monster, is the episode that fans will love. Reflecting on how many supposedly unexplainable events were debunked after they left the FBI, Mulder begins to lose respect for himself and the absurd track his life's work has taken. But a case that teases the existence of a monster, and the investigation conducted by Mulder while he's in the midst of this crisis, ends up being a great

TV TALK: PAGE 27

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NURSE: FROM 5

destination for urgent care services.

Nurse Practitioner (NP): A nurse practitioner is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse who has completed a master's or doctorate degree and extensive clinical training. They make up an integral part of the medical community. Our center's nurse practitioners treat and diagnose a range of acute injuries and can additionally conduct a number of testing services. Responsibilities include prescribing medication, obtain medical histories, perform physical exams, diagnose and treat common illnesses and injuries, order screening exams, interpret laboratory data, educate about health promotion and management of chronic diseases and provide referrals to any specialists. Many nurse practitioners have previously worked in nursing, lending incredible knowledge and skills to their role as a medical provider. During their graduate work they receive extensive training, which allows them to perform general medical services for patients of all ages. This training and experience also makes NP's qualified to supervise a team of technicians, assistants and clerical staff. On average, nurse practitioners spend 6-8 years in college. The NP must pass a licensing board exam to practice medicine and the medical provider must participate in continuous learning to maintain licensure. In addition to urgent care centers, nurse practitioners also work in hospitals, primary care offices, college health centers, specialty offices, community health clinics and teach at universities. Nurse practitioners also participate and publish pertinent medical research. Some nurse practitioners own, operate, and manage their own clinics. Our nurse practitioners here at AFC Doctors Express Urgent Care North Andover often act as our patients' primary point of contact for several medical needs.

Physician's Assistant (PA): physician's assistants are in high demand, as they offer people in even the most rural areas quality health care, without needing to see a licensed physician. While the majority of licensed physician's assistants have a specific field of medicine that they specialize in; physician's assistants primarily are versed in a general set of medical skills. This makes them a staple in urgent care clinics, as they have the requisite skills necessary to provide most urgent care services. Like nurse practitioners, physician's assistants can also prescribe medication, obtain medical histories, perform physical exams, diagnose and treat common illnesses and injuries, order screening exams, interpret laboratory data, educate about health promotion and management of chronic diseases and provide referrals to any specialist. PA's typically work under the direct supervision of a physician, whom they help with a variety of services. In addition to urgent care centers, PA's also work in hospitals, primary care offices, college health centers, specialty offices, community health clinics and teach at universities. PA's also participate and publish pertinent medical research. Physician's assistants have a four-year college degree, in addition to a Master's or doctorate degree. They must pass a licensing board examination to practice medicine and participate in continuous learning to maintain licensure. They have extensive clinical training, which allows them to perform general medical services for patients of all ages. This experience also makes them qualified to supervise a team of technicians, assistants and clerical staff.

The physicians, physician's assistants and nurse practitioners at Doctors Express possess the skills and expertise to provide our Merrimack Valley patients with impeccable care. Next time you're feeling ill, have a nasty cut, or have taken a bad fall, come visit us at 129 Turnpike St in North Andover or 380R Merrimack St in Methuen.

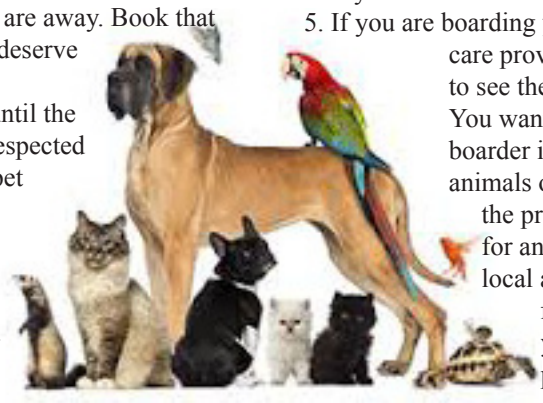
Marie Sacco MSN, FNP-C is Family Nurse Practitioner who specializes in primary care. In addition to owning and operating her own primary care practice at 790 Turnpike St in North Andover, she also spends 1-2 shifts a week at Doctors Express Urgent Care Centers in both Methuen and North Andover

TRACEY'S DOGGIE COLUMN

Going Away on Vacation? Book Your Pet Care Now

TRACEY ZYSK
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Got Pets? Want to go away but not sure who will take care of your animals? Hire a Professional Pet Care Provider. Don't hold back your travels because of them. Plan and plan ahead. With a little research, you will be able to find appropriate pet care to help you while you are away. Book that trip, why not? You deserve it!



But do not wait until the last minute...well-respected and accomplished pet care businesses book quickly. Start your research now and start interviewing pet care providers to ensure you find the one that is the best fit for you, your family, your finances and most importantly your pets.

If you are looking for a pet care provider here are a couple helpful tips:

1. Insured & Bonded
2. Registered Business with the town
3. Animal CPR certified
4. Criminal Background checked
5. Accomplishments in the industry and in the community

Common questions to ask:

1. What type of animal experience does the person have? (holding a leash doesn't count) - If the pet care provider is caring for your cat, rabbit, chickens, etc., does the pet care provider have experience with these types of pets.
2. Does the pet care provider have experience administrating medication?
3. Who will have the key/access to your home?
4. Is the business affiliated with any organizations within the pet/business industry?
5. If you are boarding your pet at a pet care provider's home- ask to see the kennel license. You want to make sure the boarder is allowed to have animals on his property. If the property isn't zoned for animal care, the local animal control officer can remove your pet from the property.
6. References

If you are looking for a pet care provider in your area I suggest you visit this website and type in your zip code www.petsit.com. All companies on this site are insured & bonded.

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, TV and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units and National Award winner of the Platinum PAW award. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on Facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care

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BABIES AND BRIEFCASES

Teaching Your Children the Skill of Money Management

Cheryl Hajjar
VALLEY PATRIOT MOMMY COLUMNIST

When a child is born, no parent ever thinks to themselves, "I sure hope he/she grows up with no sense of personal financial responsibility." I've never met a parent who didn't want his or her children to be in a better position than they were, whether that be financially, emotionally, or otherwise. Given the economic climate our kids are growing up in today, it's the job of moms (and dads!) to impart money lessons that will prepare them for the real world of career changes, bills, student loans and credit.

Yet few parents teach their children about money actively — even among the entrepreneurs I know. The list of excuses is long: "I don't want to burden my child with the topic; they have the rest of their adult lives to worry about money," or "I don't know enough about finances to teach them," and even, "My parents never taught me about money and I figured it out eventually."

Here's the problem: Whether or not you actively teach your kids about money, they're learning from the world around them. Want to take the reins and teach them proactively, or let your actions and the world's examples concerning money be their teacher? Here are 7 straightforward tips for teaching your children about money (as early as they can read):

Change your mindset: it's not taboo. Many of us were raised to believe that you don't talk about money, even with your family. I'm here to tell you that the one place you should talk about money is in your home. Just like you don't want your kids learning about sex or drugs (other "taboo" topics) from others, you should make it your intention for them to learn about money from you. By talking comfortably about money at home from an early age, your child will feel open to asking questions, and in turn, afford you opportunities to impart important financial lessons.

Don't let your fears or self-imposed limitations hold you back. Typically, we're stunted when we face a fear that we recognize as something important. The fear of talking with your kids about money is no different. Whether or not you consider yourself a financial guru, you know more than your child does about money. It's not necessary for you to teach topics at a high level that may be above your head. However, it is critical to teach your kids about the basics: the value of a dollar, saving, investing, giving back, earning and financial goals. Don't allow your reservations about your own inadequacies when it comes to money hamper your child's ability to get a leg up on his or her financial future.

Keep it age appropriate. Once your child is old enough to learn to read, she is old enough to learn the value of a dollar. When you hand your child lunch money or buy her a new backpack, she is receiving messages about money. Use these everyday occurrences as teachable moments. No need to talk about tax brackets, stocks, interest or retirement accounts with your little ones. Set the foundation, and those lessons will be better understood when age-appropriate.

Make it fun! Many adults say that money is their biggest cause of stress. Do your best to keep this message out of your conversations with your kids. Don't taint their ability to see money positively; frame it as a tool, not a stressor. Take time as a family to decorate piggy banks together, which can be envelopes, shoeboxes, jars, coffee cans, or actual banks. Or, create a colorful community allowance chart that is displayed proudly in your kitchen to keep the conversation going each day.

Create structure and be consistent. The sooner you can teach your children about the value of a dollar and the importance of saving, the better off he will be in the long run. Create a structured way to do this. One way is through an allowance system in which earnings are derived from a set list of chores with dollar-value allocations. In order for your child to take control of his earning potential, let him know how you arrive at his potential weekly or monthly earnings. Base the maximum earnings on your child's monetary needs. A sample formula is to use the child's age or grade in school multiplied by a set dollar amount: for example, $5 x 3rd grade = $15/month. Based on your pre-determined earning amounts per chore, deduct for any chores not completed. Tally and pay at fixed intervals.

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IN THE GROOVE with Cindy Annis

PAUL ANKA PART 1

There are a lot of rock and rollers that helped shape the era, and of course, we could go back to the forties, or maybe even the thirties, but Cindy's Vinyl Vault is about the fifties, sixties, and seventies, so lets stay there.

Mr. Paul Albert Anka was born in Ottawa, Canada on July 30, 1941. His parents, Camilia and Andrew Anka were both from Lebanon. In Ottawa, they had a little restaurant called The Locanda.

Paul sang in the Orthodox Church Choir at a young age and studied music theory with the choir director. He studied piano with Winifred Rees. He went to Fisher Park High School in Ottawa, and was one third of the trio The Bobby Soxers.

In 1962, Paul met Anne de Zogheb. She was the daughter of a Lebanese diplomat. They met in Puerto Rico. She was a model and he was on tour. They got married in February of 1963 and had 5 daughters. They lasted, together, until 2001. Paul met Anna Aberg in 2008. They got married and share a son. They also divorced in 2010.

In Ottawa, Canada, they named a street after him, Paul Anka Drive. They even gave Ottawa the day off on August 26, 1981, for Paul Anka Day. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States on September 6, 1990. Yup! He did it all.

Paul's professional career started when he was only 14. The first song he recorded was called, "I Confess." In 1956, his parents allowed him to go to Los Angeles where he worked hard to build contacts in the record field. After hooking up with Modern Records, his first record was released. "Blau-Wile Deverest Fontaine." Not any kind of a hit, but it was a beginning.

Paul continued working hard and keeping in contact with anyone in the music world. He went so far as to sneak into Fats Dominos' dressing room when he was performing in Ottawa. He met Fat's manager and added one more name to his "Who's Who" in music.

When he went to New York City in 1957, he auditioned for Don Costa. The music and lyrics he used were original and originally thought to be about one of his babysitters. It wasn't until 2005 that the truth came out that his lyrics were about a girl from church that he didn't even know. Don Costa liked that Paul could write as well as perform.

The song, "Diana," brought him to instant stardom. It took off in Canada, going straight to #1 and in the States, it did the same. It is one of the best ever selling singles by a Canadian artist. His next four songs were almost as impressive. They all climbed the charts to at least top 20 in 1958. Paul was just 17 years old at this time. He was considered one of the biggest teen idols of the times. He started touring around the world. He toured with the late, great Buddy Holly. He even wrote a song that Buddy Holly recorded shortly before his tragic death. Ironically, the title of the song was, "It Doesn't Matter, Anymore."

iTune into Cindy's Vinyl Vault on AM 980 WCAP every Sunday night from 10-12, Monday night 11-12, and Wednesday nights 9-11. Check out our face book page at https://www.facebook.com/cindysvinylvault/. You can even send us an email at cindysvinylvalt@gmail.com. Until next month remember it's not how old it is, but how great it sounds!

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Grow in Faith

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Have you ever asked yourself the following questions; do I have enough faith to receive from God? Do I have the right kind of faith to receive from God? What if I am lacking in faith? I don't know about you, but these questions and others concerning this five-letter word called Faith, drove me crazy during my growth as a young Christian.

Thank God I finally had the light of God's word shine on this subject and my eyes finally open to the truth that living the Christian life really has nothing to do with depending on my faith, and all about living my life depending upon the faith of Jesus Christ! The Apostle Paul said it perfectly in Galatians 2:20, " I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

In Romans 1:17, we read the following, "The just [those made righteous by Jesus Christ] shall live by faith". We also read in Hebrews 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;" The word author in this verse could also be translated to beginner, or originator, and the word finisher could also be translated to completer. Our faith originated with Jesus Christ and our faith is completed in Jesus Christ.

When it comes to this word, FAITH, the most simplified definition that I was taught but yet very true is having a good opinion of God. Faith always looks to God. Faith does not deny difficulties; faith is not reckless or indifferent. Unbelief reasons from the difficulties then to God. Faith looks through the difficulties straight towards God of whom nothing is impossible! Faith is keeping your eyes on Jesus!

To help clarify what I mean let's look at Matthew 8:23-26, "And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. 24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. 25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. 26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Why did Jesus say to his disciples, O ye of little faith? The answer my friends is that nothing bad was ever really going to happen to the disciples because they had the Son Of God in the boat with them! Their attention instead of being on Jesus in the boat with them was on the difficulties staring at them right in their faces, which were the storm and the winds and the waves. Their opinion of Jesus at this time was very little.

There's another example and this one involves Peter walking on water. We pick up the story in Matthew 14:24-33, "But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spoke unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Say what you want about Peter but he actually did walk on the water, which is an impossibility! On the other hand, storm or no storm, man cannot walk on water. But Peter proved everybody wrong as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus! But as soon as he took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink. Peter allowed the difficulties surrounding him to overwhelm him taking his eyes off of Jesus and for that reason he began to sink, but Jesus miraculously in a split second had his hand on Peter pulling him to safety into the boat. After all this, what did his disciples have to say? "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" Their opinion of Jesus changed!

How do we attain and grow in our good opinion of God and His wonderful Son Jesus Christ? Very simple, and we find our answer in God's Marvelous Word in the book of Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." In the Greek text, the word God is really the word, Christ! So it

LAROCQUE: PAGE 24

Special Education Inclusion Rates in the Merrimack Valley

Amy Berard
EDUCATION COLUMNIST

An independent review of special education in the Massachusetts commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Education finds that, "Students with disabilities who spend more time being educated with their typically developing peers, on average, earn higher scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests."

Based on this finding, the Massachusetts Department of Education recommends that students with disabilities spend more time being educated with their typically developing peers.

Often this means an inclusion classroom. What is an inclusion classroom? It is the least restrictive setting for a child with an IEP (Individualized Education Plan). However, merely naming a class an inclusion class does not meet student needs. A true inclusion classroom is composed of a certified general education teacher and a certified special education teacher working conjunctively both in planning the classroom learning activities and also in executing those plans together each class period for the entire length of the class.

The state average of IEP students in an inclusion setting is 61.1%.

Based on the most recent data from the DOE, some districts are doing better than others at providing an inclusive environment - the least restrictive setting for students with disabilities.

With 62.8% of IEP students in an inclusion setting, Methuen exceeds the state target of 60.5%. The graduation rate for Methuen students with IEPs is 49.2%.

North Andover has a rate of 71.1% of IEP students in an inclusion setting. The graduation rate of their students on IEPs is 81.7%

Andover has a rate of 62.8% of IEP students in an inclusion setting. They have an 84.5% rate of graduation for their students on IEPs.

Dracut has a rate of 56.5% of IEP students in an inclusion setting. The graduation rate of students on IEPs is 53.8%

The review also finds that "low-income students with disabilities and Latino and African American students with disabilities are considerably less likely to be included in general education classes when compared to their White and Asian special education counterparts." This is concerning considering the finding that academic success of students with learning disabilities increases with time spent in an inclusion setting.

How do our more urban areas of the Merrimack Valley do when it comes to providing an inclusive setting for students with disabilities?

Lowell reports a rate of 56.7% of IEP students in an inclusion setting. The graduation rate of Lowell students on IEPs is 21.1%

Haverhill has a rate of 52.6% of IEP students in an inclusion setting. The graduation rate of students on IEPs is 48.8%

29.6% of students on IEPs in Lawrence are in an inclusion setting. Lawrence has a 47.6% graduation rate for students with IEPs. While some Lawrence schools are held up as evidence the receivership is working, many others have shown little or no improvement. A few have become worse. For each year since 2012, the city has been labeled chronically underperforming.

Considering the DOE's finding of a direct correlation between student success and inclusion, districts throughout the Merrimack Valley will likely move toward providing more inclusion opportunities for students with disabilities.

Diet vs Exercize

Rick Bellanti
EXERCIZE COLUMNIST

I received a great question this week: Rick, I go to the gym five times a week I do plenty of cardio and work out all the time and yet I can't seem to lose weight, what gives?

First, you have to take a look at what you're eating, it really is the most important part of any health and wellness program and there are a couple of quotes that come to mind: "You cannot out train your diet" and also "Abs are made in the kitchen". Food consumption has a larger impact on your wellness goals more than working out does if you are trying to lose weight. Think of it as the new 80/20 program.

When you are trying to get healthy and lose weight, what you do in the kitchen with your meals has 80% influence over your weight loss success and the other 20% would be your workout routine. For example: You want flat abs? Everyone has abdominal muscles (abs), they are just covered by a layer of fat in most people. What you need to do is get your body fat percentage down low enough to reveal them and it's not by doing hundreds of sit-ups anymore, it's by getting the proper nutrition in your system. Your abs are really made in the kitchen not in the gym.

Keep a daily log of as a Food Diary and a Physical Activity Diary. While exercise will help with weight loss, most people will tend to overestimate the amount of calories they burned while working out and then adjust for what they think they burned off exercising and then eat more then they should in return. Also, some people will underestimate what they are taking in for calories when eating and then overeat throughout the day, keeping a log of what your taking in for calories each day will help you stay on track. You can always go back and look at your records if you are not seeing progress and find out what needs to be adjusted.

Everybody is unique and may have different caloric needs and a healthy lifestyle requires balance, in the foods you eat, and in the amount of physical activity or exercise you include in your daily routine. While counting calories is not necessary, it may help you in the beginning to gain an awareness of your eating habits as you strive to achieve the balance. The ultimate test of the balance is whether or not you are losing weight and making progress.

For better results it's always best to incorporate both, healthy eating and working out into your wellness routine. I didn't start working out until I was into my sixth month of my weight loss and wellness journey and I started out by just walking. It wasn't until my seventh month that I started to workout out and build lean muscle.

Building lean muscle in your body also helps burn fat and is highly recommended when you start to get near your goal weight and to help push you through

DIET: PAGE 24

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AMERICAN LEGION NEWS

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

John Lenotte is the recipient of the 2012 Valley Patriot Hero of the Year Award and is Commander – Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4, The American Legion, Haverhill MA; Past Commander – Department of MA. Contact: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

Starting this time of year and going all the way until the November elections, we will all be flooded with media ads, emails, phone calls and the like. The New Hampshire primary is Tuesday, February 9th. There will then be upcoming primaries in Nevada and South Carolina. Then comes what is called Super Tuesday, March 1st, where 14 states will have a primary or caucus including Massachusetts. As I mentioned last month, there are several sites to get information about the candidates and their positions. These are worth repeating: www.votesmart.org; www.politifact.com and www.factcheck.org. I will also include www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com and www.countable.us both of which also have an application for smartphones. Other similar smartphone applications include: icitizen; political tinder and vote counting. These are sites that I will look at to determine what the actual facts are!

I hope that you will vote in the primaries and the final election in November. Every election I hear people talk about how their vote does not count. Take a look back when George Bush and Al Gore both declared victory in Florida and hung up the final results. Each and every vote counts. If you are happy with your elected officials, they need your vote to stay in office. On the other hand if you are not happy, someone else may need to be elected.

My personal opinion is that this election is critical. The country is in massive debt. The military that protects us is looking at incredible budget cuts. Then there is the economy and foreign policy along with immigration and taxes. There is mismanagement with the IRS, Veterans Affairs and other government agencies. It is up to us, the citizens, the voters, to make ourselves heard. As I have written in the past, I am tired of the blame game and lack of action. Now it is time for the voters to take action and be heard. I am not endorsing any candidates but encourage all of you to get out and VOTE!!

Also, the week of February 21st, members of The American Legion from all across the country (including Massachusetts) will be traveling to Washington, D.C. for an annual conference. They will hear from several members of Congress and administration officials, along with being briefed by a very capable Legion Washington Office Staff. These Legion members will also be visiting all the Congressional offices to review priorities for the coming legislative session. There will be an update on this event next month.

A brief plug for an upcoming event at Wilbur M. Comeau American Legion Post 4 Haverhill. On Saturday, April 2nd, there will be a fundraiser for Operation Comfort Warrior. This is an American Legion charity that provides for our wounded warriors in transition. We will have an Italian supper, DJ and raffles. Cost will be $20 per person. I hope to see some of you there. Contact me at my email address listed below or send a check to American Legion Post 4, 1314 Main Street, Haverhill MA 01830.

Remember, every vote does count. I hope you will join me in line at the voting booth.

May God Bless America and the troops and their families who sacrifice to keep us free.

A Day at the Board of Medicine and What Gov. Baker Needs to Know

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Last month, I had the displeasure of spending a day in Waltham at the state's Board of Registration in Medicine, also known as BORIM.

They are a state board appointed by the governor (this board was appointed by Gov. Patrick) to oversee the disciplining of doctors accused of wrongdoing.

Mind you, I was there at the request of our Valley Patriot medical corruption columnist, Dr. Barhany, who has claimed for years that he was targeted by the board after becoming a whistle blower.

Dr. Bharany has long held that the board was disengaged, followed no laws, policies or reasoning, and seemed to act as a board designed to silence whistle blowers, protect the status quo, and cover up the misdeeds of doctors who are favorite sons in the medical field.

So, it was no surprise when I began to see for myself exactly what Dr. Bharany had been complaining about.

Before Dr. Bharany's case was called, the attorney for BORIM, Debra Stoller, came into the waiting room where nearly a dozen of his patients had waited all day to have their say, and hear the decision of the board regarding Dr. Bharany's license.

She must have thought I was only one of the Parkinson's patients when she barked at me the first time for daring to ask her name. When I pushed her for an answer, you know, being a public servant and all, she barked at me a second time, while shouting orders to Dr. Bharany to appear before the board privately and alone.

They were demanding that he testify before them with no attorney, no representative, and no member of the public to hear what he ... and they ... had to say about the long drawn out case of a doctor who has already been cleared, but still faced losing his license for being a whistle blower.

Within minutes of disappearing with Dr. Bharany, she was back to say that BORIM was going to "allow" him to have a representative with him for the inquisition (my word, not hers).

As Dr. Bhrany's patients protested that this was a public board, subject to a public meeting, with public participation, attorney Stoller turned and barked at them, telling one to shut up, and telling another that she "doesn't care" what they had to say.

Once Dr. Bhrany returned from his ten minute testimony (behind closed doors), we were informed that the board had discussed the matter and had decided that they were going to "allow" Dr. Bharany's patients to come in and speak at "public participation."

That's when the fun really began. Each patient was stopped in their tracks as they tried to speak because, the board said, there was a lawsuit pending and "they" couldn't talk about any particulars of the case.

This deception has been tried so many times that I once did an entire radio show on it. When there is a lawsuit against a public board, THEY are not allowed to discuss the details of pending litigation, but certainly the public has every right to discuss a lawsuit against a public board, at a PUBLIC participation ... at a PUBLIC meeting.

After several recesses, (and amid protests from Dr. Bharany's patients), many of them were finally allowed to speak.

They fumbled, they bumbled, they lied, but worst of all, they clearly had no understanding of public service, doing the public's business in public, government transparency, or just basic right from wrong.

At the end of the day, after the circus was finally over, BORIM mustered up all the courage they could, and voted to defer Dr. Bharany's case to ... that's right... a different board.

Which board did they send it to?

The same board that sent his case to this board in the first place. It's called punting. They just keep punting the case from one board to the other, all the while Dr. Bharany is left in limbo until people stop paying attention to his case, and then they can rule in secret ... trampling on the rights of ... not the accused ... but the already exonerated.

For years, Dr. Bharany has been trying to sound the alarm bells of just how badly whistle blowers in the medical field are treated in Massachusetts.

For years he has been warning of a system, which is corrupt at worst, and incompetent at best. And for years his cry has gone unheard. Until now.

Remember, Dr. Bharany is just one doctor and the behavior of this board happened in the presence of the press and a doctor's group of Parkinson's patients. Just imagine what is going on at those meetings when there's nobody looking.

Maybe this time, with the video of that meeting still available online, we have someone in the governor's office interested in holding public officials accountable to ... the public.

LAROCQUE: FROM PAGE 23

should read that Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ! This is how we grow our faith, our good opinion of Jesus Christ! Notice this is not a onetime hearing, it is a hearing and a hearing and a hearing again, over and over. The Bible contains this Wonderful Marvelous Word of Christ, so my suggestion for us Christians who want to not be of little faith, is to hear more and more over and over again, the Word of Christ and keep your eyes on Jesus!

Love to all, Peter Larocque

DIET: FROM PAGE 23

any plateaus you might have. Remember whichever you choose stay hydrated with lots of water, start a Food Diary and a Physical Activity Diary, even if it's a short walk for thirty minutes daily.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness coach and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs. and has lost 125lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here.

ANDOVER: FROM PAGE 5

be reached at 978-623-8321 for reservations and information.

Medical transportation to medical appointment throughout Merrimack valley as well as trips to Boston can be arranged with a 7-day advance notice. These trips are provided by volunteers. Parking fees and tolls will be paid by the client.

Weekly grocery shopping to Market Basket, Rt. 114 Plaza, is a door-to-door service. Transportation is only $4.00.

MONDAY FUN TRIPS - $4.00 transportation. Call for information on location of trips.

A well-appreciated bus service for local residents is the Shuttle Bus – Route 21. The bus makes scheduled stops at Doctor's Park, Shawsheen Plaza, Senior Center at Punchard, Andover Commons, Frye Circle, Chestnut Court/ Grandview Terrace complex. The bus can also be flagged along the route. It is available to all. No charge for those persons 60+ or persons with a disability. Maps about this bus route can be obtained on the bus or by contacting the MVRTA at 978-469-6878.

EZ transportation curb-to-curb service is available for persons 60+ and persons with a disability. Trips within Andover are $3 each way. Coupon books good for 10 rides are available for $20.00. Information is available at the Center at Punchard.

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Corporate Money-grubbing Medicine Has Been Here a Long While

Bharani Padmanabhan, MD, PhD
MEDICAL CORRUPTION COLUMNIST

The Boston Globe and other Pravda-style mouthpieces for entrenched power centers extoll Boston hospitals as the world's best, do-gooders, the fountain of innovation, etc.

Very rarely and after carefully claiming that it is an isolated event due to some rogue physician and not the hospital itself, the Globe has reported on some failures. The death of Globe columnist Betsy Lehman is a classic example, where the Globe blamed a junior doctor, Dr. Lois Ayash, who was nowhere on the scene, instead of bigwigs within Dana Farber. Being made of sterner stuff, the plucky Dr. Ayash sued the Globe and won $2 million.

The Globe chose to pay $2 million rather than name and shame the hospital bigwigs.

Money plays a hugely dominant role in all decisions made by Boston's hospitals.

John Kerry's surgeon had been trying for years to stop MGH from allowing two surgeries to begin on two patients at the same time under one surgeon. Dr. Dennis Burke was thrown out of MGH as a result, and surgeons who bill for two surgeries at the same time were supported by MGH even after the Globe reported on massive injuries suffered by patients. Dr. Burke was warned he would "never be forgiven" for caring about patients. MGH now claims it has a new policy. It requires surgeons to be within a QUARTER MILE of the operating table where "their" patient is being operated on. Dr. Burke is on course to being hounded by the Massachusetts Board of Medicine.

Another money case that has been boiling for a while is the use of power morcellators at the Brigham. Power morcellation is a technique that spreads cancer around a woman's abdomen and appeals to doctors who get money from device manufacturers to use and promote their power morcellators. Money comes into the hospital for using power morcellators.

Naturally, Brigham executives were unhappy with Dr. Hooman Noorchashm and his wife, Dr. Amy Reed for informing Congress about the danger of power morcellation. Dr. Reed got cancer from power morcellation and gets her surgical care from her former colleagues at the Brigham. The couple used to both work at the Brigham and still have friends there.

The last time Dr. Reed came in for surgery, they were met by security guards, subjected to a "humiliating and distressing physical search" and her husband, Dr. Noorchashm was kept under physical guard while she was in surgery. Being honest and plucky they immediately complained to Suffolk Superior which condemned the Brigham the next day for claiming Dr. Noorchashm was a security threat and ordered the hospital to lift the 'security' drama.

Dr. Reed can now both get cancer care and talk against the power morcellators that Brigham & Women's Hospital finds most profitable and which spreads cancer inside women. If the court had not immediately helped, the hospital would have successfully driven away and silenced a cancer patient in order to help bigwigs with a financial interest in power morcellators.

Pharma companies go to great lengths to get their expensive brand name drugs on hospital formularies. Patients who get started on drugs in the hospital stay on them as outpatients. It is thus profitable to capture them from the get go.

Doctors who stand up and block certain brand name drugs from getting onto the formulary when cheap generic alternatives are available, get hounded out of medicine itself. They get reported to the Board of Medicine as selling opioid prescriptions to known drug addicts then get condemned to the Physician Health Service as being drunks and druggies themselves, knowing it is totally false. The Physician Health Service exists to detain honest physicians

MEDICINE: PAGE 27

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Is Legislation the Solution to the Opiate Crisis?

Dr. Frank MacMillan, MD
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Think about it for a moment. It is no secret that we have a serious problem with opiate addiction and overdose deaths. Opiates are drugs derived from the opium poppy flower. They are very powerful because they not only block the neurotransmitter receptors that tell us when we are in pain, but they also stimulate the pleasure sensors in our brains, producing a sense of euphoria, or wellbeing. Our bodies have their own internal signaling pathways that use those same receptors by way of endorphins, or our own natural opiate like substances that regulate perception of pain and mood. With the chronic and repeated use of pharmaceutical and synthetic opiates however, our own endorphin system fails. Addiction results from the desperation that comes from when the drug is needed to feel just normal and not even high anymore.

The science of pharmacy comes to us from the experience over thousands of years, that natural substances made by living organisms, can be used to selectively poison or mimic a physiologic function to produce a result. Cholesterol lowering drugs are a great example. Originally derived from mushrooms, statin medicine poisons an enzyme in the liver, HMG CoA reductase, reducing cholesterol synthesis and therefore lowering blood cholesterol levels. If you have heart disease, poisoning that cholesterol pathway can reverse the blockages in your arteries, prevent another heart attack and extend your life. It's really a great example of how a poison can make you live longer and better. In a similar manner, opiates bind a receptor called Mu, like the Greek letter. Mu receptors are scattered all over the body.

Dr. Frank MacMillan, Jr, MD, FACG specializes in Gastroenterology and Liver diseases, is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology and it's Massachusetts Governor. He is Vice President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr MacMillan is a native of North Andover and practices Gastroenterology in Haverhill at Merrimack Valley Hospital, where he currently serves as the Chief of Medicine. He has also been a member of the North Andover Board of Health since 2007. You can email Dr. Frank at fpmacmillan@comcast.net

Activating Mu receptors in the brain stimulates the brain's pleasure center, giving the high. This Mu activation also results in diminished perception of pain, but also depressed consciousness. A known side effect of Mu activation is constipation and nausea from the inhibition of gut motility. Excess Mu activation in the brain depresses the drive to breath, so overdose literally causes suffocation and death, but the person is totally unaware because they are asleep.

As a result of training and experience as a medical doctor, I am familiar not only on the use of opiates to control pain, but also very aware on how dangerous these drugs can be. An important part of this knowledge base is understanding which conditions are appropriate for opiate drug therapy, and more importantly, which are not. We have always known that opiates are addictive. The British fought a war with the Chinese over opium. Opiates are among the most addictive substances known, and this information is not new.

While it is true that many people get their first exposure to opiates from a physician or a dentist, it is also the widespread availability of opiate drugs, both legal and illegal, that makes this problem so vexing. There is no question that the medical community needs to get much better on how best to safely utilize these powerful and potentially dangerous drugs in ways that are rational and evidence-based. Many would be surprised to learn however, that Massachusetts physicians and dentists are among the lowest prescribing, on a per capita basis in the country. This begs the question, why are we at the epicenter of the opiate addiction and death crisis?

The answer is complex, but there is diversion of legal opiates, and the economics of cheap illegal opiates are feeding a seemingly limitless demand. The rare case of a rogue physician selling

OPIATES: PAGE 27

Vaso Patsi Hatzigiannis D.M.D.
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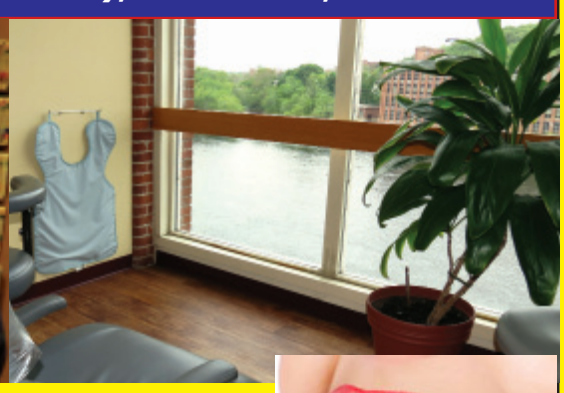
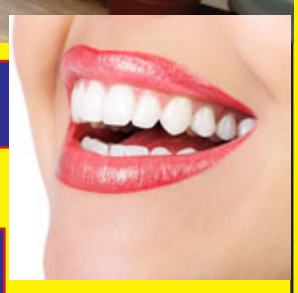
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the big guys.

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CARINA PAPPALARDO NAMED CEO OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CENTER - The Psychological Center, Inc. announced last month that it has named Carina Pappalardo as the Chief Executive Officer of the community, nonprofit organization. The Psychological Center in Lawrence offers long-term therapeutic residential substance abuse treatment programs for women, supportive housing for men and a homeless shelter for individuals in need. These include, the Daybreak Shelter, Pegasus House, Women's View and Safe Haven. Pappalardo joined The Psychological Center in 2011 and was previously the Director of Human Resources and Operations. In her new position, she is committed to maintaining strong community involvement, expanding treatment and recovery options and increasing education and awareness while leading the center through its next phase of growth and development.

TPC's board members include: Barbara Grondine, TPC Board President and Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee member; Jennifer Kannan, TPC Secretary and Methuen Councilor-at-Large; and Mary-Ann Fleming from Family Connections.

Pappalardo and the Board of Directors are also pleased to welcome, Methuen Police Chief Joseph Solomon; Jessica Finocchiaro, Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee member; Eduardo Lebron, from Northeast Consulting and Interpreting, LLC; and Charles Manzi, a marketing executive, to the board.

UNICO MERRIMACK VALLEY NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

UNICO Merrimack Valley, the local chapter of the largest Italian-American service

NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 9

organization in the United States, announced it is now accepting applications from area high school seniors for the opportunity to receive one (1) of five (5) $2,500.00 scholarship grants. Candidates shall be of Italian heritage, seek to pursue their education at a four-year college or university, and shall have demonstrated strong achievement in academic studies and extra-curricular activities. Prospective applicants should visit the Chapter's website: unicomerrimackvalley.org to access, complete, and submit the scholarship application as well as to review applicable instructions and information. The deadline to submit applications is March 15, 2016. Since its inception, UNICO Merrimack Valley has awarded $200,000.00 in scholarships to deserving area students and has donated about $800,000 to local charities in the Merrimack Valley.

SPRING PLANT SALE - The Middlesex Conservation District, a not for profit environmental agency, will be holding its annual Spring Plant Sale on Friday 4/22 (3-6pm) and Saturday 4/23 (8am-noon) at the 4H Fairgrounds, 51 South Chelmsford Rd, Westford, MA. All items may be ordered in advance for best selection through March 31, by visiting our website at www.middlesexconservation.org or emailing middlesexconservation@yahoo.com to request a catalog. The sale includes tree and shrub seedlings, perennials, fruits, groundcovers and garden supplies, with an emphasis on native varieties. All sale proceeds benefit our conservation programs.

HINDUS SEEK DIWALI HOLIDAY IN CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Hindus are urging Chelmsford Public Schools (CPS) in Massachusetts to include Diwali, the most popular Hindu holy day, as a school holiday in their 2016-2017 school calendar and beyond. The 2015-2016 Academic Calendar of CPS, whose "mission" includes to cultivate "well-rounded lifelong learners", showed Good Friday as a holiday. Hindu statesman, Rajan Zed, in a statement in Nevada today, said that it was not fair to Hindu pupils and their families as they had to attend school on their most popular festival. Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism, indicated that this unfairness did not send a good signal to the impressionable minds of schoolchildren who would be the leaders of tomorrow. Holidays of all major religions should be honored, and no one should be penalized for practicing their religion. Moreover, it was important to meet the religious and spiritual needs of these students, Zed added

Zed noted that awareness about other religions thus created by such holidays like Diwali would make the CPS pupils well-nurtured, well-balanced, and enlightened citizens of tomorrow.

CPS needed to develop some sensitivity to diversity in the changing demographics and grant holidays on Diwali and major festivals of other religions so the students do not have to miss school to celebrate their sacred days. CPS should awake and understand that we live in 2016 now, Zed stated.

Rajan Zed further says that Hinduism is rich in festivals and religious festivals are very dear and sacred to Hindus. Diwali, the festival of lights, aims at dispelling the darkness and lighting up the lives and symbolizes the victory of good over evil. Besides Hindus, Sikhs and Jains and some Buddhists also celebrate Diwali. Hinduism, oldest and third largest religion of the world, has about one billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in USA.

CPS has over 5,000 students, including over 12% Asian. It's Chelmsford High School was included on Newsweek's 2015 list of the Top Public High Schools in the country. Dr. Jay Lang is CPS's Superintendent of Schools, while Al Thomas is Chairman of Chelmsford School Committee.

HOME HEALTH VNA RECEIVED DEFICIENCY FREE DPH SURVEY RATING

DPH periodically reviews home health care agencies, hospitals and skilled nursing and rehabilitation facilities to ensure compliance with State and Federal regulations and to assess the quality of care provided. The DPH surveyors arrived unannounced on Wednesday, December 30th, and began an immediate, thorough review of clinical documentation, administrative and clinical procedures, employee files, quality data and collection and contracts. In addition, they conducted interviews with clinicians and went on home visits to assess care in the home. At the conclusion of the four-day survey, Home Health VNA was found to be in full compliance with all the conditions and regulations of a quality home health care agency.

"With changing and increasingly stringent regulations, achieving a deficiency-free rating is extremely difficult to accomplish," said John G. Albert, MBA, FACHE, President and CEO of Home Health Foundation. "The results demonstrate that we have dedicated and talented clinicians and support staff who are committed to our agency and the patients and families who rely on us for care,"

CHALLENGER: FROM PAGE 7

borhoods or those schools since the day of Challenger disaster.

Here we are 30 years later, and as the news is abuzz about the anniversary, I can't help but look back and see that the people who run our inner city schools today are just as out of touch with the real world as the administrators were back then. I also can't help but look at those same Lawrence neighborhoods today and feel the sadness that they are no safer today than they were for my students at the Oliver School back then.

If you compare the overall state of our public education system today, to that of 30 years (and trillions of dollars) ago, it's easy to see where it all went wrong. It's easy to see why kids in public schools are still failing, and why they are failing in higher numbers with lower standards.

As tragic as the space shuttle disaster was for the country, for the families of the astronauts, the people who work in the space program, and those who knew the victims, that day was a social event for many of the kids in my classroom, and indeed the school. It's hard to imagine the reaction was any different in any of the other schools in Lawrence at the time.

Public schools have lost their focus on teaching subjects like math, history, science and English, and spend far too much time on feel good assemblies about the space shuttle, bullying, saving the planet, or anything else. The more math, science, history, and English a public school can expose inner city kids to, and the less lecturing about feelings they can engage in, the better chance these kids will have of getting out of violent neighborhoods and make a better life for their future.

That's what I learned on the day the space shuttle Challenger blew up.

Tom Duggan is president and publisher of The Valley Patriot Newspaper in North Andover Massachusetts, a #1 Best Selling Author, Host of the Paying Attention Radio Program, lectures on media bias and police issues, is a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass. Citizens Alliance, and a 1990 Police Survivor. You can email your comments to valleypatriot@aol.com.

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TV TALK: FROM PAGE 20

justification for the series return and it's so good that it really makes a case to keep The X-Files around longer.

The series returned to great ratings on both nights of its 2-night premiere, averaging over 13 million viewers. Fans can only hope this leads to more episodes after this short 6-episode run is over. The cast and creator Chris Carter have said they are very interested in continuing the series in some form, whether it be more TV or a 3rd feature film.

In the months to come we will be seeing revivals of other classic series such as Prison Break, 24, Full House, and Twin Peaks, just to name a few.

The X-Files airs Mondays at 8 on FOX through February 22nd.

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

Follow Bill on Twitter @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at Bills TV Talk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.

LOWELL: FROM PAGE 13

candidates is saying or promising.

Lowell is great city. A pretty darn good place to live and raise a family. I suppose a lot of people in America think the same thing about where they are living or at least I hope so. Most of us all want something better for ourselves and mostly our kids. We wonder if things will be better for them and we want things to be better for them than it is for us. So who will be the best person to create the environment that will give us that shot? That's what I keep asking myself and is why this upcoming Presidential election is so important. Because the results of it, positive or negative, will trickle down… Somehow.

So how will this election affect my little quarter acre of America? How will it affect yours? No one can predict the future, but I can say that I haven't been happy at all with the last seven years. I was discouraged by the prior eight before that and well; the eight before that put American in the position it is now. The beginning of the destruction of the middle class. One word… NAFTA.

Anyway… The answer: Take the time, do your research on these candidates and choose wisely.

Hey… It's only your own future at stake and my little piece of America.

MEDICINE: FROM PAGE 25

in purgatory and block them from ever retrieving their medical license.

The Board violates all laws and even conceals documents from the Supreme Judicial Court on behalf of Big Pharma and the hospitals. This sort of retaliation is so routine it never gets any press.

The Board attacks only honest doctors who protect patients. If the doctor is a confirmed serial rapist like Dr. David Victor (26 known victims) or has received numerous complaints from women like Dr. Roger Hardy, who ran away to Thailand, the Board has allowed them to practice for years and years. Dr. Hardy made lots of money for his employers, which was the important thing. Money. The Board refused to touch him.

For the Board to yank your license or a hospital to send guards after you, you need to be honest, care about patients and be a threat to hospitals making money.

Bharani Padmanabhan MD PhD is a neurologist specializing in multiple sclerosis in the Boston area. scleroplex@gmail.com

OPIATES: FROM PAGE 25

opiate prescriptions, a so-called pill mill, is just that, rare, though its simplicity as an impetus to do something is appealing. That activity is already illegal, unethical, and there are severe punishments that are already in the law to deter this kind of activity. As a practitioner of medicine, nearly every time that I started a new job, my appointment slots would quickly fill with people seeking opiates. Emergency rooms see scores of people every day with painful conditions. Many are legitimate, though some are drug seeking. The elderly and infirm, dependent on others for care or demented, are often the victims of people in their own families stealing their medicine. There is no test that I can rely on that proves to me that someone is in pain, or tests how severe it is. Some of those addicted to drugs can become incredibly gifted in their abilities to manipulate others. Anyone who has a family member addicted to drugs immediately would easily understand what I am speaking about.

Over the past few years, there has been literally an explosion of training and dissemination of best practices in opiate prescribing for physicians and dentists. There has been a renewed recognition that these drugs are indeed very dangerous, and as a result, we have been better at overcoming reluctance to apply best practices, such as written pain contracts, pill counts, urine testing and other methods to reduce the chance that medicine is diverted. It also looks like a real-time prescription drug monitoring system will be in place this year so physicians know when someone is doctor shopping and getting opiates from multiple sources. Better training and resources will help, but this is already a generational struggle.

The state's regulatory enforcement agencies, the Department of Public Health, the Board of Registration in Medicine already have wide authority to regulate the prescription of opiate drugs. The Governor and the legislative leadership, in good faith is trying to move forward a bill in conference committee to help stem this crisis and they are to be commended on this effort. I am concerned however, that the impulse to enshrine a rule on limiting the number of days supply of opiate medication, that the person can receive, into the law may cause a good deal of harm. You should be aware, opiate prescriptions must almost always be presented on paper prescription. Electronic prescribing of opiates is not widely available, and telephonic, faxed prescriptions are not accepted. A person who has poor mobility because of surgery or illness may be forced to go to a doctor's office before they have recovered from their illness, just to get an adequate supply of medication for pain. Co-pays and deductibles have been dramatically increasing since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and some people so affected may be unable to afford repeated office visits to obtain limited supplies of medication. Legislation cannot anticipate every special need. Just because there may be an exception written for cancer patients, part of the art of medicine is applying knowledge and judgment to people and situations that are not in the textbook, or for that matter, anticipated in the law. A recent proposal to ban the prescribing of oxycontin to children under the age of 18 made no consideration for those afflicted with sickle cell anemia, which produces bone pain so severe that it can lead to suicidal thoughts.

In my opinion, legislation is not the best way to address the problem of opiate addiction. It is a very blunt instrument that cannot anticipate special considerations, and it requires another act of legislation to repeal or modify if it is learned that there are unintended consequences. It makes so much more sense to me to pursue the already available regulatory avenues and leave the practice of medicine to those who understand it best. It is indeed tragic that it has come to the crisis point that it has, but we should not make things worse by our most earnest desire to fix things now. Complex problems seldom have easy solutions. We owe it to those who are truly suffering, to not be seduced by seemingly simplistic solutions.

MONEY: FROM PAGE 22

Use visuals whenever possible. The community chore chart on the fridge is one great way to hold everyone accountable, in addition to keeping the conversation fluid. The potential for your child to seek positive reinforcement grows as more excitement develops around this focal point. Fun piggy banks are another daily reminder of the lessons being taught. Having two piggy banks for young kids is ideal, so as to begin teaching the difference between short- and long-term savings. Physically separating the money will be a helpful visual tool.

Don't try to perfect the plan. While it may be tempting to try to create a "perfect" plan, series of lessons or allowance structures, don't get caught up. The most important thing is to begin talking to and teaching your children about money in a positive way. The longer you wait to make your plan perfect, the more messages your child will learn inadvertently, and you may later need to un-teach. You can always change or tweak your system as you go, but it's most important to get started. As they say, time is money.

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